

DEVERE;

OR, THE

MAN OF INDEPENDENCE.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF TREMAINE.

My free drift
Halts not particularly, but moves itself
In a wide sea of wax.

SHAKESPEARE.

Power to do good, is the true and lawful end of aspiring: for good *thoughts* (though God accept them), yet, towards men, are little better than good dreams, except they be put in act; and that cannot be without power and place, as the vantage and commanding ground.

BACON.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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DE VERE.

CHAPTER I.

FEMALE DELICACY.

A woman scorns sometimes what best contents her.

SHAKESPEARE.

Was it possible for De Vere to quit England without wishing to see Constance? He both wished and sought it; but, extraordinary as it may seem, it was not now so easy.

It may be supposed that, after all we have recorded, the pleasure (never very great) which his uncle had in seeing him had not lately been increased. With Clayton he had terminated, not merely friendship, but acquaintance; and the delicate feelings of that gentleman were so

overpowered at the sight of the man he had injured, that he always endeavoured to avoid a meeting, which was not indeed more pleasant to De Vere himself. But Clayton was almost always with Lord Mowbray. The morning calls of De Vere had, therefore, been chiefly confined to inquiries after his cousin; and his cousin was, somehow or another, seldom to be seen. The dinner, as well as the evening invitations, also became much less frequent than they had been.

We have observed, that there are motives for every thing; but Lord Mowbray was too glad to shroud his fear of seeing a man he had injured, under another fear that that man might injure him. In fact, after having given the utmost latitude to the intimacy between his daughter and De Vere, he was taken with a sudden fit of prudence, and thought there was a danger in it, which on every account he ought to avoid.

To do him justice, he possibly never would have thought of this himself. But Lord Cleveland, of whom we have so long lost sight, put it in his head. The undeviating coldness of Constance, had completely estranged this great aristocrat in love, as well as every thing else,

from pursuing the only real affair of heart he had ever had. His pride as well as his love, had sustained bitter mortification, which, added to his disappointments at court, cankered his bosom; though he understood the demands of pride far too well to let it appear. He carried about with him, therefore, more than ever, that internal gnawing, which, though the vulture did not appear, was not less keen than that of Prometheus itself. His misery was so complete, that, though of success with Constance he had begun to despair, his love itself had not, therefore, abandoned him, and he felt that the success of a rival would have driven him to madness. Against this, therefore, it was his active study to guard. As to his disappointment in politics, he had made a tolerable compromise, in no where suffering himself to appear as the *subordinate* supporter of Lord Oldcastle's ministry, but as the head of a party, powerful in itself, which Lord Oldcastle was supposed to court, under the name of the king's friends. And though for some of those friends, the monarch, whose name was usurped, had not the highest respect, yet it was convenient for many to erect a standard for themselves, who either thought they were above serving under the

banners of another, or whom no other was very eager to receive. With this standard in his hand, and with some followers, Lord Cleveland contrived to blind the world on the point of his personal consequence with the highest personage in the state; and while that world believed that Lord Oldcastle was no more than his co-equal, and only more than his co-ordinate from his own suffrance, things did pretty well.

Not so with the love of this ambitious person:—he had desisted from his pursuit, because too proud to continue it; but, with all his tact, he could not resist the bad taste which now got possession of him, in disparaging the former object of his adoration. But his attempts were ill enough concealed; and men, and women too, drew their own conclusions from the sneering tone he affected.

Poor Constance!—But no! she was not poor! The dignified and unresenting manner with which she received accounts of this behaviour, and even sometimes personally perceived it, set her far higher than ever in the approbation of mankind; and Lord Cleveland was forced at last to say, that he would no longer raise her into consequence, by making her the object of his criticism.

But Lord Cleveland had too intimate an acquaintance with his own heart, not to know what would be the death's wound of its happiness, if ever it had been happy. The success of any man with Constance he dreaded, as much as his female equal in ambition, Madame de Pompadour, ever dreaded a rival mistress with her dissolute monarch. The cup of each was poisoned, and its sweets turned to bitterness, by the all-devouring fear in which they lived. Well might each of them have exclaimed to their ignorant admirers, in the language of the arch demon of pride himself,

“Ay me ! they little know

With what fierce torments inwardly I groan,

While they adore me on the throne of hell.”

The life of Lord Cleveland had, in this respect, become a perpetual fever. The assiduities of the Duke of Bellamont towards Constance had been wormwood to him ; while her resistance of them, filled him with still greater fear ; for, with his opinions, it was impossible for him to think any female heart, not profoundly pre-occupied, could resist youth, rank, and wealth, such as belonged to this favoured young man.

He watched therefore the approach of all who came near her, and above all that of De Vere,—who, he said, with fierceness, to Clayton, seemed born everywhere to cross his path. In De Vere himself he could perceive nothing but respectful distance; but (led to the observation by Clayton,) in her he saw, or thought he saw, a constraint of manner towards her cousin, which, to one of his experience, told many tales. It made him heart-sick; and, in mere relief, he hastened to communicate his suspicions to her father..

That penetrating nobleman was glad of any cause for what had so entirely baffled, as well as affected him; namely, the obstinacy, as he called it, of his daughter, in refusing the two greatest matches in England. But when the suspicion got hold of him, that all this was occasioned by love for another, and that other, however nearly allied to him, ruined in his prospects by his own rashness, and, of all men in England, the most destitute, it should seem, in the powers necessary to redeem himself, the concern and embarrassment of my Lord Mowbray were at their height.

It was his fate always to appear to despise counsel, yet never to be able to act without it

and it mattered little whose or what that counsel was, provided it afforded him an opportunity to unburthen himself. On the present occasion, the obviously best counsellor he could have was at his elbow, in the very party about whom he wished to consult. But this was far beyond his lordship to conceive. On the contrary, it seemed but regular policy to conceal from her all that he wished to discover; though a word, a look, on his part, in parental confidence, would have laid her heart bare to him, from a sense of filial duty alone.

He knew not the jewel he possessed, and took another course, more in the spirit of a politician, but whether so well calculated to succeed, was a question which he did not ask. In a word, trusting to the high mind of his sister, he wrote to Lady Eleanor his fears that there might be a greater intimacy between the cousins than it was prudent to cultivate, considering the disparity of their situations, and, in particular, considering the views of many men of the very first consequence in the state, in regard to his daughter. In other respects too, he thought it behoved Lady Eleanor to give her son advice on his personal conduct; "which seemed," he said, "that of a madman, determined on self ruin, rather than

of one who, from his abilities and ancient name, might rise to any height he pleased. Tell him," said he, "on my part, (though I have often told it him in vain, myself) to remember the maxim which I always propose to all young men, '*nul- lum numen abest, si sit prudentia*;' which means, my dear sister, (for I dare say it will be necessary to translate it for you,) that a man may always make his fortune, if he only have his wits about him."

Strange as it appeared to Lord Mowbray, this letter did not seem to produce the intended effect upon Lady Eleanor. Far from remonstrating, as he wished, with her son, "It is not for me," she said, in reply, "to give advice to De Vere. In regard to my niece, he knows what honour is too well to stand in need of it. In regard to the world, I will not affront him by offering it. Depend upon it my son will covet no elevation that is to be purchased at the expence of principle; and of that principle I willingly leave *him* to be the judge. At any rate, if he fail, he has me, and honourable poverty, to retire upon."

Lord Mowbray made a thousand wry faces as he finished reading this letter. Then, muttering something about honourable nonsense, he

rang the bell to desire Lady Constance to attend him ; and without much reflection, as Lady Eleanor had refused to help him, he thought himself justifiable in placing her letter in the hands of his daughter, leaving the latter to guess the contents of that to which it was an answer.

The delicate Constance was thunderstruck at allusions, and replies to allusions, which, however obscure without the subject matter, proved evidently to her sensitive mind that her conduct and feelings, in that which was of the last consequence to a woman's delicacy, had not only been canvassed in a correspondence between her father and her aunt, but had been supposed, by her father at least, to have been the subject of observation in the world. Her fears (as they always will where true modesty is concerned) went before her inquiries, and she felt a shock on the communication of her aunt's letter, from which she could not recover. At length she falteringly asked, what could have given rise to answers so deeply affecting her conduct, perhaps even her reputation in society ?

Lord Mowbray, observing her agitation, which was in truth beyond what was warranted by the real circumstances of the case, then perceived.

the mistake he had made, and lamented that he had not kept a copy of his letter to his sister. "It would have explained all this at once."

"However," added he, "do not be alarmed; I only mentioned what I had been told of the observation of the world, upon your intimacy with Mortimer, and desired his mother, for his sake, as well as yours, to give him proper advice upon the occasion."

"Only!" cried Constance, looking aghast—"Only! The observation of the world!—For Heaven's sake, my dear father, what can this mean? What have I done that the world has observed, or that you should convey to my aunt, and, through her, to another? Oh! how properly has she judged, and how like herself! And to what am I reduced, when my whole pride of character has hung upon such a chance?"—She here stopped in an agony of distress, which alarmed her father the more, because he could not possibly understand it.

Alas! though her parent, he was not made to deal with so delicate a being as Constance. He endeavoured to soothe her, but knew not the real topics of consolation. He felt he had been in fault, yet knew not exactly how; and

at any rate thought it beneath him to own it. It was therefore with difficulty, and certainly not to her relief, that Constance collected that the world coupled her name with her cousin's ; but for her intimacy with whom, her father thought the fortunes of the Duke of Bellamont, or Lord Cleveland, would not have fared so ill.

This was quite enough to subdue Constance, without the addition of the displeasure Lord Mowbray expressed at such liberties being taken with the heiress of his house, or the threat of his eternal anger against Mortimer, if from his or her conduct, their names should be mentioned together, and such reports continue. The heiress of the Mowbrays felt indeed no *affront* to her name, by a report which coupled it with that of De Vere ; but the dignity and purity of the Lady Constance felt alarmed that she had been observed by the eye of curiosity, and suspected of favourable but unsanctioned feelings towards a man who had never addressed her. This interview, therefore, with her father, was the most painful of her life.

To the feelings and fortunes of De Vere the consequence was still more disastrous. His

intercourse with his uncle had long been on the wane ; but though he had from principle endeavoured to wean himself from the intimacy with his uncle's daughter, which had been till then the charm of his existence, yet the persuasion that he possessed her regard was the soothing support of his soul. What then did he feel, when, instead of the pleasure which usually lighted up her features at his approach, he found her reserved, constrained, and, as he thought, distant ? 'Twas the first real shock her personal demeanour had ever given him.

About the same time he also received an account from Melilot, whom he had made one of his agents for the borough, that his sister had been forbidden by her lady, from ever meddling with that subject again, " which, to be sure, said Melilot, argues a change in my lord, that some on us mayn't like."

The change in my lord neither surprised nor alarmed De Vere ; the change in my lady did both.

Embarrassed, distressed, disappointed, mortified, his cousin now became the object of his study more anxiously than ever. Her distance

was as evident as his own misery upon feeling it; and, utterly unable to account for the alteration, he was tempted to exclaim

“ Frailty, thy name is woman ! ”

But something whispered him that though it might be the name of woman, it was not the name of Constance.

He had, however, no opportunity in London, of clearing up that point, and it was amidst all these uncertainties of his heart, that his other great interests were excited by the tragic end of Beaufort, the consequent illness and danger of Wentworth, and his undertaking to accompany him in his convalescence upon that tour of diversion, prescribed by Dr. Wilmot. Thus, he had little opportunity to penetrate the thickening cloud that obscured the fondest hope of his mind, far less to dissipate its darkness, and let in the day.

Thus disgusted with every thing that had awaited him in his own country, he began to meditate a longer sojourn abroad than his attendance upon Wentworth required, or than at first he had been disposed to contemplate. His heart always beat high in resistance to oppression, whether towards himself or others; and

he pleased himself with the thought of offering his sword to the confederates in Poland, who, though arrayed nominally against their enslaved king, were then interesting every generous mind by their exertions (unfortunately vain) against a foreign yoke. The notion was rather floating in fancy than embodied in fixed determination; and Wentworth dissuaded him from it, as useless to those whom he wanted to serve, as well as detrimental himself, if he should be wanted at home. Nevertheless, it continued to possess him, and hints of it got abroad.

There was one person, however, to whom it was necessary to tell it in form, from whom he expected comfort, or at least sympathy, and whom, even without this design, duty as well as love impelled him to see. His attachment to his mother had always been so tender, and the confidence between them so sincere, that his best feelings were soothed by the thought of beholding her again. He longed also to visit the home he loved, after what he began to think had been a toilsome and anxious pilgrimage in a new world—for such the events of the last eight or nine months had made every thing appear. He therefore begged a week of Went-

worth, to visit Lady Eleanor and Talbois, before he departed from England ; a request which was without difficulty granted by one who, however an invalid in body, and a prey to grief in mind, felt that mind still lingering among the scenes of his greatness, and yielding with regret to the necessity there was, for a time, to abandon them.

CHAPTER II.

CHANGE OF SCENE.

And whither go they? up to the eastern tower,
Whose height commands us subject—all the vale.

SHAKESPEARE

DE VERE was soon among the haunts of his earlier youth, and seemed to breathe a freer air on the banks of the Dove. The grotesque mounds of Tutbury Castle, with its ivy-mingled walls, once more greeted his eye; and he stopt his horses to indulge himself in a thousand recollections. For we may remember how dear the solitary grandeur of this remnant of ancient independence had been to his childhood, how often he had climbed among its ruins; and he did not now fail to recal the wild pleasure with which he had sometimes, for an hour together, surveyed, from the top of one of its towers, the devious course of his favourite stream. He at the same time remembered what peculiar notions he had formed of the interior

ot that world which he then beheld afar off. They were indeed somewhat different from those he had now brought back with him.

Other recollections of a more recent date, and from what had lately passed, not quite so happy, also mingled themselves in his mind.

The horse he rode (which had been sent over to meet him at Burton) was a mare called Beauty, who deserved her name so well, and whom he had taught so gently to canter, that she had been the favourite palfrey of Constance, all the summer long. It added to his pleasure in seeing her again; he frequently patted her neck, and even talked to her of her mistress, who had rode her once on a visit to this very spot. The docile animal seemed, as he thought, to understand him, by the sensible manner in which she received his caresses; "but she will, I fear, ride you no more, Beauty," said De Vere, and the thought added not to his spirits.

Having now crossed the Dove, and advanced midway into the village of Tutbury, the zigzag Saxon arches, and gothic old segments of the church, half-way up the hill, arrested and pleased his eye, as they had often done before; and the castellated towers above, seemed to beckon his return to them, so much in the cha-

racter of an old friend, that he could not continue his route, but delivering Beauty to his groom, "I will give one more hour," said he, "to a place which used to make so many happy."

Accordingly, he bounded up the steep, and as he traced out, (as he easily could, though ruined), the rude outlines of this great baronial residence, he fell into more precise thoughts upon such a scene, than had employed his mind in earlier days. For he had not then seen modern courtiers, or jealous politicians; he knew not then the meaning of intrigue, nor the silent and baneful machinations of a Parvenu.

His better information now drew a comparison, prompted by the place, between the modern grandee and the ancient noble; and he thought with vivid interest of the changes which time had so strongly wrought in the pride, power, and consequence of the feudal chief. I will not say that he lamented it, or *preferred* the lot of the lordly savage; though had he by chance been born the owner of such a castle as Tutbury, three or four centuries sooner, he perhaps would not have complained. It is certain he fell into a train of meditation upon the high

*mind*ed bearing of the old English gentleman, compared with his diminished consequence in modern days, not very much to the advantage of the latter.

We believe it is Smith who makes a comparison between the personal consequence of an old baron, and a courtier of the present day ; the latter of whom, in order to shine in a drawing-room, spends that on a diamond buckle, which enabled his ancestors to maintain a thousand retainers. De Vere had not then read Smith. His feelings, however, made him jump to the same conclusion ; when, contemplating the almost inaccessible fastness where he found himself, he exclaimed with the stout Earl of Norfolk—

“ Were I in my castle of Bungay,
Hard by the river Waveney,
I’d ne care for the king of Cockney.”

In fact, the scenes he had left in London, sank almost into contempt, when he thought of that enviable independence, as he called it, which used to be asserted by the great English Thane ; and it need not be wondered, that, in the present moody state of his mind, he did not

advert to the questionable nature of the independence itself. For the safety even of such a chief could not be named with the immense improvement in the lot of all, which the greater security of balanced rights, and a government by law, have since established.

He did not then think himself wrong; but looking only at the dark side of one picture, and the bright side of the other, he almost apostrophized the castle, as, with folded arms, he walked the area of its keep.

“Yes!” said he, (thinking, perhaps of the ancient earls of his own name) “there was a charm in the feudal times with all their faults! If they were insecure and ignorant, they were favourable to the manly virtues. Mansions like these, massive and impenetrable, though rude and rough, were the emblems of their lords,—little refined, but hospitable, bold, and commanding. I question if they have done well to exchange their power of protecting themselves and others, (while they lived doing deeds of kindness among a devoted tenantry) for the favour of court smiles, or the ambiguous expectations kindled by a Lord Oldcastle.”

We by no means give these reflections as just.

Nay, De Vere soon after himself corrected them. But they exemplified how easily, when the mind is under any commanding impression, the judgment will take its tinge from the colouring of the mind.

With these reflections, De Vere strode across the keep, now a green sheep-walk, where once the minstrelx of the midland counties sang in weeds of peace, but where no sound was now heard, save that of the sheep-bell.

His object was to visit a homely old couple, who had, nine or ten years before, inhabited the great tower of the place, and had often kindly received him in his wanderings. They were a farmer and his wife, who rented the keep and other lands, turning the spacious and massive tower into an inconvenient farm-house.

De Vere remembered with pleasure the talk he used to have with the kind old man and woman, and the impression their singular habitation made upon him.

It was still the same as when he last saw it, though it had certainly undergone a strange metamorphose since the days when "time-honoured Lancaster" kept royal feasting within its precincts. There was still, however, some

remnants of the more modern days of Elizabeth :

“ An old buttery hatch, worn quite off the hooks ;
And an old kitchen that maintained half a dozen old
cooks.”

There was, indeed, no

“ Old study, fill'd full of learned old books ;”

But there was the same old bible, in black letter, with the chain which had once attached it to the clerk's desk in the church below ; together with the same Pilgrim's Progress, and Gulliver's Travels ; which latter used so to puzzle both the farmer and his wife in a winter's evening, to make out whether it was true or false. These were all lodged in the kitchen window, so high from the floor, and so deep in the wall, that a portable wooden horse-block always stood under it, to enable the farmer to reach them when he was studiously inclined.

The kitchen was at least sixteen feet high. A smaller room adjoining, but full as high, contained a bedstead as old as Plantagenet, with modern yellow woollen curtains, not a great deal older than the restoration. This was lighted,

far above man's height, by loop-holes, glazed on the outside, save where "the temple haunting martlet" had made its way through the aperture, to build its nest in security.

Here, for thirty years, the farmer and his wife had reposed, with nothing to disturb them within, and indifferent to the storms which often rattled without.

Above, a corresponding chamber served as a cheese room, and another as a granary, and the whole was so still, and so secluded, that one might have supposed it the abode of the early inhabitants of the earth. This had never struck De Vere, when in his state of rusticity, as out of the common course. Returned from the world, and cognizant now of its thronged exhibitions, its strivings, and gilded trappings, the contrast forcibly engaged him. He questioned his old friends with his usual affability; but they were so impressed with the imposing air and countenance which a few critical years, added to education, had given him, that they viewed him with a sort of sheepish wonder. By degrees this wore off; but the monotony and seclusion of their life, though they denoted no unhappiness, occupied as they were with their country gear,

whispered him that those born in the world were made to *mix* in the world.

“Not, however,” added he to himself, as he clambered to the leads of the tower to try to discover Castle Mowbray in the distance; “not as my uncle mixes in it.”

That residence of his ancestors was indistinctly visible to the naked eye, though several miles off. Indeed its scite was pretty much the same as Tutbury, each being built on a sudden and precipitous ridge, overlooking a wide extended plain through which the Dove and the Trent both meandered. But his friend, the farmer, now brought him an old-fashioned spying-glass, left there by some of the Vernons when they visited the keep; and through this he easily discovered not only the white turrets of his uncle’s mansion, but the terrace where he had so often walked, and the park where he had so often rode, with one with whom he felt as if he should never walk or ride again. The scenes, indeed, of his happiness with his cousin, thronged upon and vanished from his fancy so fast, that he thought them a dream.

“Alas!” cried he, “would that they had really been so!” and he descended hastily from the tower.

This distant view of the castle he had so loved, filled De Vere with the desire of approaching it nearer, and as he had announced to his mother no particular time for his arrival, he resolved to make a circuit of some miles, in order, before he joined her, once more to visit that proud place, where not many months before he had been so happy, that his present lot seemed wretched by comparison.

CHAPTER III.

DOVEDALE.

Haply this life is best,
If quiet life is best ; sweeter to you
Who have a sharper known.

SHAKSPEARE

THE beams of the sun had for some time sloped upwards, when De Vere left Tutbury Castle and re-crossed the Dove, with a view to push on towards Castle Mowbray that night. The mood generated by his visit to Tutbury was not exhilarating. The contrast between the wild and bounding elasticity of his spirits, when first he saw it, and seemed to take possession of all that he saw *from* it ; and now, that he felt disappointed (for he did so) in all the hopes hitherto of his life, made his heart heavy within him. He revolved all that had passed since he first left the forest of Needwood ; and, in a spirit of

mortification, he could not help mentally exclaiming—"Roll on, ye dark brown years, ye bring no joy on your wings to Ossian."

He checked his horse for a minute, when he came once more to Sudbury, and lingered over that beautiful front, "looking tranquillity," which had always pleased, but in his present humour, pleased him more than the utmost sublimity of grandeur. There are moments, indeed, when the soul may be so pensively occupied with its own feeling, and that feeling requires so much the balm of quiet, that grandeur seems even offensive to it; and while De Vere loitered willingly beside the low grey wall that bounded this gentle though ample mansion, he would have passed at a gallop, the façades of Versailles, or the princely elegance of Stowe itself.

Presently he again joined the Dove, and as it was scarcely a longer road to Castle Mowbray, and a splendid sun promised a long length of evening, he resolved to pursue the beautiful course of the river, through all its vallies, and along all its rocks, which, towards its source, render it so infinitely more romantic than when gliding gently through the plain. He was acquainted with almost every one of its little in-

tricacies and entanglements of wood and crag, and, with Cotton in his hand, had often lounged along the banks of Bentley brook, the favourite scene of that philosophic angler's recreation ; or traced him to that philosophic retreat, (now become so classical from his description of it,) where he and his master* had mingled their minds in conversation, after the patient toil of their morning sport.

These haunts, however, had now become too involved and precipitous to thread them on horseback, and in the humour he was in, it even suited him better to pursue his purpose on foot. He dismounted, therefore, at the top of a steep ascent, from which he had to sink suddenly by a winding path to the brink of the stream, which had by this time become a torrent. For he was now in Dovedale, with whose beautiful varieties of wildness and cultivation, of tangled wood, of rock, and bursting cascade, many perhaps are acquainted. He, therefore, cautiously proceeded till he stood on the very edge of the water-fall. It fumed and foamed, and rattled hoarsely from rock to rock, and led him along with it to the bottom, where it suddenly quitted its tumultu-

* Old Izaak.

ous character, and, as if by magic, became a smooth, untroubled, clear and glassy stream, watering a home view that was delicious.

It was a green glen, long, winding, and narrow, shut in by two steep banks, shaggy from top to bottom with copse wood, now in fresh leaf, with here and there an oak, or mountain ash, left for timber at the last falling. The whole space, from side to side, was perhaps not a furlong across, and the now sober river, full to the brim, wended along in silent and equal march through a margin of grass, green as an emerald. By its side, was a foot-path, so elastic to the tread, and so beset with daisies, that one would have supposed the fairy troop had made it their nightly passage as they coursed up and down this lovely dale. Hence, perhaps, its name of the Valley of Oberon.

The whole was a sight which no traveller of the world, whatever his business, character, or contemplations, but must have stopped to enjoy. The miser all shrunk, the soldier all rugged, or the politician all dazzled in mind, even the hardened sinner, or thief on a predatory expedition, would have paused to behold it, and forgot himself awhile in the gentleness of the scene.

We may suppose that De Vere could not pass

such a scene unobserved in any humour. In that he was in, it was delightful to his senses ; and while his horses, winding in the road above, only added a pleasant variety to the landscape, he sat down on a stone to indulge his reflections. To say his eye was not pleased, would wrong the truth ; but it was rather his eye than his memory. Several eventful years, (eventful in his young life,) had passed since he had sat upon that very stone, beholding the march of that very river. The stone and the river were the same ; was De Vere so too ? His mind, indeed, his character, had undergone no alteration, but not so his hopes, or his opinions. He knew this, and he could not help thinking of this his native stream, as a contemporary poet thought of the Lodon, upon his rejoining its banks, on which he had been nursed, after many years of wandering in the world.

“ Ah ! what a weary race my feet have run,
Since first I trod thy banks, with alders crown'd,
And thought my way was all through fairy ground,
Where first my muse to lisp her notes begun !
While pensive memory traces back the round
Which fills the varied interval between,
Much pleasure, more of sorrow, marks the scene.”

Remembering these verses with emotion, it is

certain that De Vere, as well as Warton, in revolving his life, meditated on

“Much pleasure, more of sorrow!”

It must be owned, however, that in a succeeding stanza, the poet had an advantage which De Vere could not boast.

“Sweet native stream, whose skies and sun so pure,
No more return to cheer my evening road,
Yet still one joy remains, *that not obscure,*
Nor useless, all my vacant days have flow’d.”

This last thought was not De Vere’s; for, free as he felt that his life had been from vice or dishonour, he felt but too keenly that it had been hitherto useless, and his lot obscure. “Of what avail,” said he, rising from his seat, and taking the foot-path,—“of what avail the advantages with which I was supposed to start; high and powerful connections; education; perhaps—(or may I indeed say it?) reputation? of what avail all these if they have only left me where they found me, idle, unemployed, and useless? Have I even gained a friend, or have I not —” (and here he faltered almost to sighing.) “have I not lost —?” The sadness of his thought prevented him from finishing. He then began to question whether in reality he might

not have been too fastidious, too unaccommodating to the weaknesses, or perhaps fair pursuits of men, at least as worthy and estimable as himself? Whether they were doing more than obeying the impetus to action, given by nature, in what he presumed to blame, and had chosen to avoid? Might he not have done as they did? And if so, might he not have kept his friends, and been in the high road to advancement with them, which might ultimately lead even to success in another object too tender almost to think of?

These were cruel thoughts at the moment: and, to say truth, ambition is not only so natural to man, but so properly pursued, *when properly regulated*, that he would be an ill teacher who should propose to eradicate it from the mind, and he a worse pupil who would suffer it to be eradicated. All this now struck the more forcibly on the thoughts of De Vere, from the solitude in which he made these reflections; a solitude to which, it might be, he was most prematurely about to reduce himself. "And yet," said he, hurrying on his steps, "to be like Clayton! or even Eustace! or Cleveland, worst of all!—No! a scene like this is heaven to it."

He was pursuing this train, when he was saluted by the note of the wood pigeon, which sounded from the copse above. He recollected how often of an evening at this time of the year, he had thrown down his spade and rake at Talbois, when tired of gardening, to listen to those lulling notes, till night came on, and he returned to a contented, though homely supper, and afterwards to a bed, in which, from the labours of the day, and his ignorance of the struggles of the world, his sleep was as instantaneous as it was sweet.

“And am I reduced to regret those days,” said he, “when all was ignorance, and I even shrank under oppression?—almost to wish for them again!—I who have known Constance, and been the friend of Wentworth?”

“And yet,” continued he, “what have I known in this world of ours, dazzling as are its scenes, comparable to what this little spot, this shut up valley may afford?”

Thus reasoned, and thus fluctuated in his reasoning, the honourable, natural, and enthusiastic De Vere; with no pleasure either from the satisfaction of his recollections, or the certainty of his conclusions. In truth, he was tossed between disgust at many things he had

seen, and his fear, that if he renounced the world, he might renounce his duty to society, and above all, the secret hope of his heart, which, whatever resolve he might make against it, still dwelt there in the image of his cousin.

He had now, however, approached to the end of the valley, where the river, rolling over a broad weir, turned itself into a mill-stream, working a considerable wheel, in the close neighbourhood of which, rose a retired house of old red brick, but looking cool and enlivened, from being almost covered by a large vine. It belonged to the owner of the mill. Opposite to this, a little promontory, or elbow, formed by a wood-clothed steep, pushed itself into the stream, so as completely to stop the pathway on its bank. Here the glen opened another reach, resembling the last in form, only busy and peopled, with houses bordering one whole side of the river; a little inn; a little church; and a pretty parsonage. To a man at ease with himself, and with mankind, this scene would have been (as in former days to De Vere it had been,) a perfect paradise.

De Vere had now to cross the river, but there was no bridge, and he looked rather wistfully at a punt, moored close to the piles which con-

tained the miller's garden. The miller himself was there, in the act of giving an evening's watering to a large bed of sprouts he had just planted, which had drooped, and hung their heads during a hot day, and now seemed to drink with eagerness the great buckets which the miller threw over them. They had already begun to revive, and looked greener and greener for it, as he continued his refreshing work. He himself seemed to take such delight in it, that though he saw De Vere's embarrassment to get across, and resolved to relieve it by punting him over in his own good time, yet he thought he would just finish his job first; "the plants," he said, "seemed so much pleased with it."

At the same time, a sleek, good-humoured looking dame, came out of the house, to beg the miller, while his hand was in, not to forget her pinks and polyanthus, which, she said, were as sick for want of water as the cabbage-plants themselves.

"I will," said the miller, "as soon as I have punted the gentleman over."

"Gentleman! what gentleman?" cried his wife; when, perceiving a person of De Vere's appearance, "Why, Lord bless me, Thomas Gur-

ney," said she, "how could you let such a gentleman wait upon them foolish plants, when, perhaps, he is in a hurry, and wants to get to his inn, or, perhaps, to Muster Archer's."

"Indeed," cried De Vere, "I am in no hurry, and could look on much longer at so pleasant a work; besides, I am the person to be obliged, and ought to wait your time."

"There! Thomas Gurney," cried his wife; "and such a civil spoken gentleman, too; do lose no more time, but get into the punt."

The miller did as he was bid. "Our mistress," said he, as he pulled against the rope which stretched across the river, "is for no sooner said than done, when a good-natured thing is in hand; and yet," added he, giving a significant toss with his head, "she would have combed my locks if I had neglected hem cabbage-plants, let alone her flowers she's so fond of, because Parson Archer gave them to her."

De Vere was amused, and it seemed a relief to his late train of thought to give a minute to this homely but obliging couple, who received him at his landing with a bow and a curtsy, and asked him to walk in. "Though I suppose," said the hostess, "you are going to Mr. Ar-

cher's, or at least to the Dog and Partridge, where there is always a genteel bed, though not, perhaps, for such a gentleman as you."

"I am not difficult," said De Vere, "and if I were, I should think I could find no difficulty in such a beautiful quiet place as this."

"Too quiet by half," said the dame; "for, except when the quality comes a pleasuring from the peak, (which they don't always do neither,) you may hear a pin fall in the street. To be sure, there is the river, and them high woods," seeing De Vere looking at them with admiration, "but one can't always be looking at the same things, and if it was not for a chaise now and then coming to the Dog and Partridge, and perhaps when Mr. Archer is so good as to take a dish of tea with me, we should be moped to death."

"Speak for yourself, Betsy," said her husband, significantly, "you were always too high for your estate, you know; now I never did mope."

Perceiving De Vere very attentive, the dame replied—

"Ah! the good man, our Thomas, he is never unkind; he has got his mill and his river."

“ Ay, and a lovely river too,” said Gurney, “ and our fathers thought so before us, without wanting to leave it. Perhaps the gentleman has not heard of the poesy upon it, as old, for aught I know, as the river itself,—

‘ In April, Dove’s flood,
Is worth a king’s good.’ ”

De Vere said he had read of it, and the miller went on addressing his wife.

“ And you, Bess, might be as happy if you would but mend stockings more and read them books less.”

At this he pointed to at least half a dozen of well-thumbed volumes from the circulating library at Ashbourne; and then both parties appealed to De Vere on their little dispute.

De Vere here found himself a scholar in the shape of a master, for being called upon to decide between these discordant characters, who yet seemed to proceed lovingly enough together in their way, he found that he himself obtained a useful lesson. The happiness of honest Thomas was unambiguous; it spoke in his eyes, in his cheeks, and in his gestures. It was always within his reach; for he was always employed

and always at home. His mill lay just across his garden, and in the one or the other all his interests, save those he gave to Mrs. Gurney, were centred.

On her part the happiness was rather more equivocal. "Our Thomas" was too good to be despised by her; but, from having no family and much time, she took to reading novels, and these turned her head, and made her discontented. She thought what fine things there were to be enjoyed in the world, if it were not that she was buried alive, as she said, in Dovedale. Her great object of curiosity when they came in her way, was what she called the *quality*, such as she had read of, and such as her fancy had painted. But as she was very seldom gratified in this particular, she was very seldom happy; for her Thomas Gurney did not exactly come up to her notion of Mr. B. in Pamela, or Sir Charles Grandison, with whose histories she was intimately acquainted. De Vere found, therefore, that she was an *ambitieux*, with all qualities for being one of the first class, if she had but been born in another station, instead of a miller's wife. She was, however, a little consoled by the attention she said she always received from Mr. Archer.

“And who is this Mr. Archer?” asked De Vere.

“Our worthy vicar,” replied the dame, “and a complete gentleman he is.”

“A don’t look so well as a did, though,” said Gurney. “A used to be as spruce and nice as one of my quickset hedges, and shaved every day ; and now he is as great a sloven almost as I be, God help me,” added Gurney, stroking his sleek chin, on which there was at least a three days’ beard.

“Archer, Archer !” exclaimed De Vere, “what aged man is he ? or do you know what University he belonged to ?”

“A comed from Oxford, I think,” replied Thomas, “by all them almanacks as hangs about the house ; and as for age—”

“La ! bless me, sir,” interrupted Mrs. Gurney, “he cannot be above your own age, only you be black, and he fair.”

“I think I know him,” said De Vere, and he thought of a gentleman a year or two older than himself, of no mean acquirements, and even genius, of whom his friends had conceived great hopes at college, and with whom he had maintained a sort of intimacy there, though it did not continue after their separation in the world.

“I think I’ll call at the parsonage,” said De Vere, “and see if I am right, if you will be so good as to let any body shew me the way.”

“I will do it myself,” said the miller.

“Put on your coat then, Thomas,” said his wife: “one would really think you had no coat to your back, walking with such a gentleman without one.”

The matter was soon arranged; the vicar’s was but three stones throw off, and De Vere, with his obliging guide, were soon at the parsonage.

CHAPTER IV.

UNEARNED RETIREMENT.

But unto us, it is
A cell of ignorance ; travelling abed ;
A prison for a debtor, that not dares
To stride a limit.

SHAKSPEARE.

AND a very pretty parsonage it was. Nothing could be more quietly gay. The house and garden ranged themselves up the side of a gentle hill, so as to have elevation sufficient to give effect to the prospect, without losing the advantage of a most perfect shelter. The river ran at foot, and from the farther bank of it rose a steep mount covered from top to bottom by timber of all varieties. The water was smooth as a mirror ; every thing around was tranquil, yet cheerful, from the scenery being dotted with cottages and gay gardens ; in short, Nature seemed here to repose in all her elegance.

The vicar was not at home, but was expected

every instant ; and having now ascertained by the superscription of an old letter on the table that Archer was his college friend, De Vere said he would wait for him ; and he took his place in a window which seemed at once a seat for a painter, a poet, a philosopher, and a pious man. One would have thought it happiness enough merely to sit there.

Such, perhaps, it would have been with the proper requisites of a disposition to be content within so very narrow a circle. Without it, it is not rock, or river, or luxuriant copse, or emerald margin, that can bring back the mind from the field of its designed interest, the active business of life. From temporary care, such a seclusion is a charming relief,—and he who is worn out with fatigue, and struggle in his journey through the world, might think, and even find it exquisite. Others, however, who like the owner—but let the owner, in this instance, speak for himself.

De Vere knew Archer directly, as he let himself in at a little gate from the road side ; but was surprised to see, as he came up the walk, that he who had ever been so spruce and erect, so as to be almost a coxcomb at college, was now slovenly in his appearance and attire. An

ill-made, and ill-brushed coat, seemed to hang about him like a sack, and a slouch in his gait, amounting to stooping, had taken place of the brisk, lively mien, De Vere had remembered.

Before he got half way up the rising ground that led to the house, he threw himself into a seat, the back of which had long been broken, and the whole going fast to decay. Here he reposed, with his head on his hand, and viewing his landscape with a lack-lustre eye, he yawned, and seemed little cheerful in his meditation.

“Is it even so?” said De Vere, “what can this mean? He seems melancholy, if not unhappy; yet I have not heard of any misfortune that has befallen him. But I will shew myself.”

Archer scarcely rose, when he first perceived De Vere; till making out who he was, his countenance lightened into a joy that was evidently sincere.

“And is it you?” said he, “you, who leave the gay, the busy, and the powerful; you who, I see, are sometimes at court, and come to visit a poor parson in his Siberia?”

“Siberia!” exclaimed De Vere, “I was just thinking what a delicious retreat you had acquired for your philosophy and your muse; both of which promised so much at Oxford.”

“Retreat!” said he, looking surprised. “Oh! ay! yes! but retreat from what?”

He paused, when not to lose the theme he was upon, De Vere observed, “retreat from the world.”

“Where I have yet never been,” interrupted Archer, with some quickness.

“Surely,” said De Vere, “this delightful place is better than St. Bride’s, in the city, or Allhallows, Barking, which I remember to have heard you were offered and refused; but I did not then know to what a paradise you gave the preference.”

“True! true” returned Archer, “I had then little ambition to preach to the lord mayor and aldermen. I thought as you do of philosophy and the muses, and I have no right to complain; nay, I ought to be, and, indeed, am—satisfied.”

The last sentence was uttered in a tone not quite corresponding with the sentiment; perhaps there was a little faltering as he brought out the words. “But come,” added he, cheering himself, “come into my hermitage, and tell me how it is that I see you here, and where you are going—and have some refreshment.

You will sup and take a bed with me of course."

De Vere said he must get to Castle Mowbray that evening, but he would take some of his brown loaf, which, with the remains of a clouded decanter of wine, and some used glasses, were still on the table.

"I have a sad dawdling slut to wait upon me," said Archer, rather reddening, at observing De Vere's examination of his dessert. "She does just as she pleases, and she generally pleases not to take away my dinner things till supper is ready: I beg you will excuse it."

De Vere went on with his admiration of the beautiful window, and his commendation of the preference Archer had given to such a spot; "surely much better," said De Vere, "than the air of the city, or even to be a court chaplain."

"I don't know that," said Archer, "when all road to ambition is cut off. I observe that even in the city a man may be followed as a preacher; and at court the very Maudlin pigs, we used to laugh at, have got on;—while here ——"

"Come," said De Vere, seeing him fall into an uneasy pause, "I will not let you quarrel

with a place I am absolutely in love with. One would think Virgil wrote those soft flowing lines here,

‘Rura mihi et rigui placeant, in vallibus amnes,
Fluvios amem sylvasque;’——

“Continue the line,” said Archer, briskly, and see how Virgil himself answers for me,

‘Fluvios amem sylvasque—*Inglorius*.’

‘Tis that *inglorius* that makes all the difference. — Yes!’ continued he, “the place is well enough, and the boors that surround me are well enough; but shall I confess the truth? such an old friend will not laugh at, nay, he will pity me.”

De Vere assured him he would rather sympathize, and begged him to proceed.

“I am tired of them,” said Archer. “I am not in my place, and found it out before I had been settled six months.”

“Yet I think you took possession in Spring,” observed De Vere, looking at the numerous blossoms out of doors.

“True,” said Archer, “and for some months I was in rapture, with what is, I allow, very

paradisiacal. But still monotony is monotony—I have sat in this window, till I am weary with beholding; and I have thumbed over Theocritus and Virgil, as the appropriate study for such a place, till I knew not what ideas their beautiful language excite. Yet I am afraid of changing them for Horace or Pope, or Boileau, because they take me into a world from which I feel cut off. I confess to you I never now open a book of philosophy, on the contempt of the world, but I think how bright the world might have been; how much I may have missed; what honour, perhaps profit, certainly pleasure, (the pleasure of good society) and all because I fell in love with retreat, as you call it, without knowing what I was to retreat from.”

“Still there is your church,” said De Vere, feeling, however, his friend’s last remark very pointedly.

“True! but what church? I cannot preach—that is, what I call preach—to the Squire, for he would not understand me; and as for the rest of the congregation, what are the praises of a parcel of old women? Will they lead to a deanery? Will they bring me among the choice spirits of the age, or shew me the actors or busi-

ness of life? No! forgive me, if being a man, I feel I ought to live with men and not with stocks and stones."

As it was neither De Vere's business nor intention to argue with a man who had evidently made a mistake, he did not attempt to reason about the real duty of his calling; but he could not help saying something of the strifes and struggles of the world which he seemed to covet, and the inefficacy of even success to insure happiness.

Archer answered with vivacity, "All very true, I have no doubt; and those who have gone through them might be glad to come here. But *I have not* gone through them; I know not even what they are, and cannot judge by other people's senses. Perhaps," added he, with a doubtful smile, and fixing a jaundiced eye on De Vere, "we uninitiated may even think we could do better than those who tell us of their woeful experience. At any rate, we wish for an experience of our own."

"What think you of your parishioner, the honest miller, who shewed me the way hither?" asked De Vere.

"What think you of his wife?" said Archer.

"She seems to have the hankering we are

talking of," observed De Vere; "but as for him, he appears the twin brother of his friend of Mansfield, and might sing with him,

‘How happy a state doth the miller possess,
Who would be no greater, nor fears to be less!’

How much is said in that last line!”

“’Tis the sum of all content,” answered Archer; “and to tell you the truth, I, his parson, have often proposed him to myself as an object of imitation in my philosophy. But somehow or another I could never make it out. The fellow labours and sings, and sings and labours, nay, has an aspiring wife to keep in good humour; yet is always happy.”

“Ought not this to be a lesson to us both?” said De Vere.

‘I own it; but I cannot follow it; and you will recollect, honest Gurney has no *ideas*, and, therefore, no wishes beyond Dovedale, while I am like the Abyssinian prince, who was not content with his vale of happiness, till he could compare it with the vale of misery: so, till the world has broke my head, I cannot believe that it intends to do so. In short, I exclaim, with the poor girl in the *Tempest*, who was told, the first time

she saw a man, to beware of him, for he was an evil spirit—

‘ There’s nothing ill can dwell in such a temple :
If the ill spirit have so fair a house,
Good things will strive to dwell with ’t.’ ”

De Vere found it useless to go on, and, indeed, to say truth, had no such fixed or definite notions himself upon the subject, as to give him a right to be oracular. Archer had made him turn his eyes into his own bosom. He saw that the most beautiful retreat on earth was no asylum to those who had not earned, or were not prepared for it, and he resolved jealously to task himself upon all the theories and fancies which had before taken possession of him.

His horses had now descended the hill above Dovedale, and he took leave of his friend, somewhat wiser himself, and leaving *him* somewhat happier, for this passing visit.

that of a large and ample mansion, which we have been accustomed to see peopled through all its halls and chambers, and every thing full of life ; and the same mansion, on our return to it after absence, deserted ; the master flown, the subordinates dispersed, and the instruments of pleasure or service entirely withdrawn. Such now appeared to De Vere the whole region of Castle Mowbray. Where all had resounded with jollity, there was silence ; where there had been nothing but motion, nothing moved ; where every window had been illuminated, all was dark.

The first thing that made him feel the change was the deserted state of the park-lodges. The gates that had used to fly open at his approach, were close locked, and no keeper at hand to give him entrance. He had, therefore, to go round by a rough back way to the now empty court-yard, which had so often thundered with the rattling of wheels.

He passed through a wicket, (the great gates being here also barred,) and found the pavement already overgrown with weeds. He called in vain for some chance assistance, where at least a dozen grooms and helpers had usually been on the watch ; and as none came, he himself

tried the doors of several stables before he found one that yielded. This was what was called the post-horse stable, which had only bails for stalls ; and being calculated for full twenty cattle, we may suppose how lost, and almost forlorn, his two poor steeds appeared. Though almost summer, they shivered in their cold ranges, where not a remnant of fodder could be detected, and their shivering seemed to be caught by the feelings of De Vere. He sent his man to the house in search of help, and throwing his own great coat over his pretty mare—

“ It was not thus, Beauty,” said he, “ that you were used to be treated, in this once hospitable place.”

The thought, somehow or another, communicated itself to his own situation, and, strange as it may appear, from the peculiar associations which it brought along with it, this little circumstance affected the whole frame of his mind. He felt a gloom—a sort of want of support, unusual to his nerves ; nor did he like to quit Beauty, who had been such a favourite with the heiress of the place, and now seemed the only friend he had left, where once he had almost commanded.

The return of his man announced to him that

there was little chance of comfort in the castle if he remained there the night. The house-keeper had gone on a visit to her friends at Uttoxeter, and the rest of the servants had all sallied out to a neighbouring fair, whence they were not expected till the return of daylight. In short, there was nobody left in the whole place but old Robin the keeper, who was laid up by illness, and whose wife kept watch with him, till the truant servants should return.

“To tell the truth, your honour,” said De Vere’s groom, (a sober, middle-aged campaigner, who had lived with the General,) “I am not sorry for it. I speak not for myself, for I could easily stow in Robin’s room; but I don’t think her ladyship,” (meaning Lady Eleanor,) “would be pleased with a damp bed for your honour; and I am sure you would not like Sweepstakes, let alone Beauty, to catch their deaths, or be bitten by the rats in that post-horse stable.”

“You say true, Ralph,” said De Vere, “and indeed my call here is untimely; so take the poor things to the Fox, down the hill, and bespeak me a bed; I will follow on foot.”

He did so, but not till he had rejoiced Robin by a visit of inquiry. The old man, who was recovering, became garrulous with pleasure;

though his garrulity was chiefly occupied with descanting on the difference between the castle now, and what it was when the family were down. De Vere felt this rather more than Robin, yet felt an impulse, for which he could scarcely account, to visit the abandoned chambers which had so lately been the abode of hospitality and pleasure. He, however, penetrated no farther than the armoury, where the helmets and banderolls seemed to frown upon him, and give him any thing but welcome. One figure in particular, which from bearing his supposed armour, went by the name of the Duke of Norfolk, seemed, as he thought, in the last gleam of the dusk, to gloom heavily upon him. He laughed at himself for the thought, and opened one or two doors where once he remembered feasting and song; but all now struck him as desolate, and he hastened to make his retreat. In doing so, he had to pass the room where the masque had been represented, and it rather disconcerted him.

“ Good heavens !” exclaimed he, “ that this should have ever been the court of the Queen of Arcadia !”

The sword of the duke seemed here to point most meaningly to the door, which shutting

with some force, a solemn echo ascended to the vaulted roof of the hall, and this echo was returned several times by the distant galleries and chambers above. It added something like awe to the excitement of his mind, and in the humour he was in, nerves less firm than his might have been affected by it. As it was, it left him at least disconsolate, if not melancholy.

“ I hope,” said he, as he repassed the wicket of the court-yard—“ I hope this is not ominous. Yet there were times when evil might be portended from such a reception. To-morrow I will try the dairy-house; my dear Constance used there —— alas! what right have I to apply that term to her?—The heiress of Mowbray is the Queen of Arcadia no longer; she has complied with my own advice, and fixed her temple in ‘ the bustle of resort.’ ”

These thoughts did not please, and he hurried through the park and descended the hill in darkness. For though the moon was near her full, and he implored her to cheer him, (which, whatever his reflections, she could almost always do,) she was then dark to him and silent,

“ Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.”

As he was, however, familiar with the way,

he proceeded down the hill in safety, stopping every now and then to inhale the odours emitted by the springing herbage—a refreshment to his parched senses, which he much needed, and much enjoyed.

By the time he had reached the Fox, De Vere had asked himself one or two rather important questions, which the reader, indeed, may before this, have asked for him. One of them, not the least important was, what business he had at the castle—and why he went so far out of his way, merely, as it should seem, to call up melancholy recollections and hopeless visions?

It was a question he could not answer. If any one blame him, I will not be the person to argue the matter; but leave him to the praiseworthy prudence which stops to calculate profit and loss before it allows itself to feel. Nor, if he censure a heart for getting brim full before it settle the consequences of overflowing, will I say that it is not wise in him to do so. Yet for all that, I cannot be angry with De Vere.

The moon had now broken through the fleece of clouds which had hitherto obscured her, and the mirth of several straggling parties coming from the fair, might have diverted him from his

musings on the cold reception which the castle of his uncle had seemed to give him. Some of these parties were singing, some laughing and shouting, all of them careless, none uncivil. If their jollity displayed no mental happiness, it discovered no discontent. To be sure, he that is drunk, they say, is as great as a king; and many of these were at least as great as princes. But there was a tone of pleased existence among them, which a lover of human nature would have been glad to observe. Now and then a girl's voice was heard floating, at first alone on the air, in the stanza of a quaint ballad; and this was followed by five or six deeper voices roaring the burden in chorus. The open air softened the roughness, and dignified the want of skill of these chanters as they came close to De Vere. After they had passed, as the distance increased, the sounds died gradually away, and were succeeded by the shriller notes of a tabor and pipe, which occupied a set of dancers at the inn below.

"These good people," said De Vere, as he slackened his pace to listen and moralize, "cannot be unhappy, if they are not positively in a state of happiness. But the feeling is negative—they have no sensibilities."

A few stragglers at that moment passed, one of whom in a female voice, articulately, and not meanly, sang an air which was just then very popular all over England.

“ How blest the maid whose bosom
No headstrong passion knows.”

“ That may be the true secret,” said De Vere, as she went by. “ I begin to believe that the less heart we have, the better the chance of happiness. For may not happiness after all, be characterised as the absence of uneasiness, rather than positive pleasure?”

With this profound reflection, and in a most philosophical train of thought, he lost himself in reverie, till the concourse of people whom he met, night-wandering from the fair, began to make him fear that he might fail in his expectation of the lodging which he had ordered his groom to secure for him ; and on arriving at the Fox, he found his fears were realized.

CHAPTER VI.

A RENCONTRE.

That light we see,
Is burning in my hall.

SHAKESPEARE.

Your accent is something finer than you could purchase in so removed a dwelling.

SHAKESPEARE.

DE VERE found that the inn which he thought was to give him shelter was filled with the “rude, swilled insolence of these late wassailers;” and the landlord, after many expressions of concern, assured him of the impossibility of giving him accommodation.

De Vere, however, was not only young enough not yet to take much thought of personal inconvenience, but his mind was full; and one effect of being under the influence of an

absorbing interest, is to make most others sink in the comparison. He had ridden fifty miles that day, and the topics of reflection which had employed him, had made his mind stand in need of rest, still more than his body; yet he heard the sentence of banishment passed upon him, without a murmur, though a pampered minion of the world, arriving in his travelling carriage, and thus disappointed, would have complained, and execrated his hard fortune, though he might only have had to proceed a stage farther to a comfortable inn. As it was, De Vere was not only careless of his situation, but seemed disposed to gaze on the rustic, and certainly not very refined scene, that was going forward. From all the rooms of the Fox, was heard the sound "of riot and ill-mannered merriment." And at another time, perhaps, he could not have borne to look at the loose hinds who made it, "thanking the gods amiss."

Many a hoarse cadence saluted his ear; many a practical joke his eye. Yet, with a heart full of feelings appertaining even to sadness, and thinking of her who was the very queen of elegance, he stopped a few moments to contemplate, we will not say to be amused with,

this coarse undress of nature. We cannot account for this, except that he was glad of any occurrence that could divert him from himself. Upon the same principle, that he who best understood the heart's most paradoxical seeming, makes Hamlet, with his mind full of high purpose, stop to find pastime in arguing with a grave-digger.

In sooth, it is not more extraordinary than true, that even while the soul is absorbed with some great predominant subject, we are not always indisposed to throw away a moment upon objects which we might otherwise despise.

But a very few minutes gave De Vere quite enough of these boors; and though he was not in the best humour with the grandees of the world, and thought even humble moderation preferable to the passions he had witnessed among those who were considered as the lords of life, he found that it was not among the dregs of it he was to seek consolation. He turned, therefore, from the inn, and after hearing that Ralph and his horses could be taken care of, moved off on foot, literally to seek his fortune for the night.

He had not proceeded far, before a brisk step

sounded behind him, and as brisk a voice sang out a verse of the old song of—

“ And why should we quarrel for riches,
Or any such glittering toys?
A light heart, and a thin pair of breeches,
Will go through the world, my brave boys !”

The sort of jolly sincerity of the singer, in giving this philosophical verse, would have struck De Vere at any time ; but the stillness of the night, and the reflective humour he had been in during the day, made him peculiarly alive to it, and he turned to observe the traveller, who had now saluted him, and seemed not unwilling to become his companion. He was what you call a hale, well built man, of an open physiognomy, and appeared by the moon's pale light, between forty and fifty years of age. His whole air, as well as step, denoted ease with himself, and good humour with all the world. De Vere, from the same sort of disposition we have just noticed, to allow minor things to divert an occupied mind, replied to his address with civility, not unmingled with curiosity. For the manner and language of the pedestrian seemed rather above his dress, which was that of a servant, though not in livery ; and, from

the gold binding round his hat, and his leather gaiters, (though in those times, this did not prove much,) it might be a question, whether he was a gentleman or a gentleman's game-keeper. De Vere thought him the latter, and his notion was confirmed by observing a large spaniel, superb of his species, that followed close at his heels, from which he did not stir an inch, altering his pace from quick to slow, and slow to quick, and crossing the road exactly as his master changed his course.

De Vere observed upon the seeming attachment and fidelity of the animal.

“Nay, it is more than seeming,” said his new companion, “I wish we could all of us boast as much honesty as this brute; I wish we could say with the shepherd in the fable,

“I love his true and faithful way,
And, in my service, copy Tray.”

De Vere felt his curiosity more and more awakened by this little moral ebullition of his new acquaintance, who kept walking on at a brisk pace; when, after a few minutes' pause, the stranger bethought him of that question, which in England is generally the first with which one traveller accosts another, and without

farther preface, asked De Vere where he was going?

"I wish I could tell you," replied he; "but the truth is, except that I am in search of a bed, in any hospitable farm-house I can find, I do not know *where* I am going."

"A stranger perhaps in these parts," said the other, inquiringly.

"Not absolutely," returned De Vere, "but still so much so, as not exactly to know how to shape my course to my object."

"Leave that to me," cried his companion, with heartiness. "You are young and stout, and if you can walk a couple of miles farther, you will find an old hall that will not shut its door upon you, I'll answer it."

De Vere expressed his thanks, and it being an absolute matter of necessity, and moreover, being much pleased with his fellow-traveller, he accepted the offer.

"You live there, of course," said De Vere.

"I do," answered the stranger, "and you shall sup like a prince."

The moon was silver bright; there was a soft buxom feel in the air; and the two new acquaintances proceeded cheerfully together, towards their destination. By degrees the guide

deviated from the high road, and traversing a meadow, spread over with tickled grass, and exhaling scents which he seemed to suck in at his mouth as well as his nostrils, he asked De Vere if he had ever been in London?

"I am not three days from it," answered De Vere.

"I fancy there is not much in it like this," said his fellow-traveller, and he took up a handful of hay which emitted perfumes that were delicious.

"Not much," returned De Vere, uncertain in what manner to shape the conversation.

"Nor these woods," added the keeper (if we may call him so), "nor that brook, that sings so sweet of a summer's night."

"We have the Thames," said De Vere, affecting an air of superiority.

"O! ay!" replied the stranger, "but it is fuller of ships than of wild ducks, and I can't abide ships and trade, and all that."

"You have been in London, then?" returned De Vere, somewhat amused.

The stranger immediately changed his tone. "Why, yes," said he, "once, and more was my bad luck, and somebody else's too."

At these words, a deep sigh half amounting to a groan, escaped him, and he strode on be-

fore, in a silence of some minutes, till they passed through a wood, and then a succession of fields. They then began to ascend a hill, from which the gleaming of lights shewed inhabitancy, and De Vere began to think they were in the domain of some rural thane, whose house could not be far off.

This was soon put out of doubt, by the appearance of an old garden-wall, a gate in which was opened by the stranger, and they found themselves in a bowling-green, bounded on three sides by a yew-tree hedge, cut very close and thick. On the fourth was the gable end of an antiquated house, seemingly covered to the very chimnies with ivy. There was a new wing, however, consisting of two or three rooms, with modern sashed windows, but all the rest were casements at least as old as the Tudors.

De Vere now began to be uneasy, from the fear that he had made a mistake in following his leader to a place not his own; but his hope was that his good-natured companion, being left in charge of an empty mansion, had allotted a spare chamber in it to him for the night, in the absence of the owner. What then was his surprise, when, apologizing for leaving him for a minute, the stranger said he must go and inform

his master of his arrival, who, he would answer for it, would be glad to give him a bed, and a supper too. De Vere felt distressed ; but before he could utter a word, the man had disappeared through a side door into a court yard, where the noise of half a dozen dogs, greeting his return, shewed signs of a family establishment which our traveller was any thing but pleased to think of.

He was disposed even to retire, when his new friend returned with a lad wearing a livery he had somewhere seen, and bearing a lanthorn to conduct him through the offices; and his guide then delivered him a message in form from his master, who had desired him to say he should be welcome to any thing that Okeover Hall could afford for his accommodation. This was said with the smile of one who had succeeded in a negotiation, not to mention a bow of protection and ceremony mixed, as if the speaker had now a right to assume some authority. With an air, therefore, of command, he cried to the lad with the lanthorn—"Lead the way in, Jack !" and De Vere felt he could not help following, however unwilling to intrude.

As they crossed the hall, the keeper, or Major Domo, as we will now call him, pointing

to two immense doors of black oak, well barred for the night, apologized in the name of his master for not receiving him at the great gate; but all was so unexpected.

Farther inquiry was stopped, by the appearance of the master himself, who issued from what seemed to be a library, and with a natural frankness, mixed, however, with a little shyness of countenance, said he was welcome to Okeover.

“My servant Gorblesstone,” added the gentleman, “says you are benighted.”

De Vere returned a suitable compliment, but added excuses for an unintended intrusion, in which he was most sincere. “I thought your servant,” said he, “a keeper in some forest lodge, of which I have seen a few sometimes in this country; and did not imagine I was breaking in upon any gentleman’s privacy.”

The gentleman assured him he had done so most agreeably; and, struck with De Vere’s manner, his erect carriage, and intelligent as well as ingenuous countenance, he added, “I should have been sorry if Gorblesstone had known me so little as to suppose I would deny hospitality to any one who wanted it. But, in this instance, I shall owe him thanks. From your account, however, it should seem that you have at least been in this country before.”

De Vere was not slow to tell his host who he was, and expressed his wonder at having passed the whole summer at his uncle's, without seeing him at the castle, or at least in his frequent rides discovering his mansion.

“As to my mansion,” said the gentleman, “you see it is so far out of high roads, that unless you sought it on purpose, it is not easily discovered; and as to myself, from my habits, I go so little into company, that probably if I had been here I should not have attended the castle party; but I was in fact absent in a distant county during almost the whole summer and autumn too.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE MAN OF CONTENT.

This night he dedicates
To fair content and you.

SHAKSPEARE.

We will have a last year's pippin of my own grafting, with a dish of
carroways and so forth, and then to bed.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE master of Okeover shewed no change in his behaviour on learning the quality and connections of his guest. He received the intimation of them with seeming pleasure, but no surprise; and De Vere was pleased to find himself, though so strangely introduced, in company with a man of natural and acquired good breeding, which a seemingly long retirement had scarcely been able to affect, much less to eradicate. The supper was simple but delicate. Gorblesstone, who commanded in the larder, as well as every where else, had laid a virgin cloth, on which he had served up a cold chicken, with

young peas of the greenest hue, a bowl of new milk, a cream cheese and butter, which, as Gray says of his landlady's, in *Borrowdale*, Sisera would have jumped at.

During the repast, they were waited upon by the attentive Mr. Gorblesstone: for attentive he was, not merely to their table wants, but to every word of their conversation; in which, though he never departed from the sort of affectionate respect he shewed his master, he more than once seemed not indisposed to join. For like Davy he served his master for good uses; "he was his serving-man, and his husbandman:" nor would we swear, but for the presence of De Vere, that there would not have been a regular dialogue between master and man, about "sowing the headland with wheat," or a "new link to the bucket." We will not go on to say that Mr. Gorblesstone would have thought he had a right, "once or twice in a quarter, to bear out a knave against an honest man, with his worship." But as to conversation, he once or twice ventured to give his opinion, particularly when his master commended to his guest, some ale of John's own brewing, and enlarged afterwards, as the discourse led to it, upon the happy interest of a person who had all things within

himself. John coincided heartily with his master, and observed it was better than to be a king, who had every thing to buy.

"I remember," said De Vere, perceiving that a little colloquy with this favoured domestic, would not be taken amiss, "you told me you could not abide ships or trade."

"I only meant," said Gorblesstone, bowing and hoping no offence, "ships and trade from over sea. For trade in barges along our own rivers, is all right. It is the ships that have made so many upstarts in the country, which my poor first master knew to his cost, for it was the new people that brought in the new king."

Here the good host, looking grave, as if he gave no encouragement, Gorblesstone discontinued, and asked leave to make a bowl of cup, observing that the new lemons were remarkably juicy, and the burrage this year remarkably fragrant. At the same time, he wished, for the honour of England, that lemons could grow in an English garden, or that cup could be made without them.

De Vere, somewhat amused, asked what he would do for sugar?

"There is nothing, your honour," replied

John, holding the door in his hand, as he was about to retire, "like the good old English sugar, called honey. We have the finest show of bees this year ever remembered."

When he had quitted the room, De Vere, observing upon his intelligence and zeal, his master expressed his hope that he would forgive his officiousness.

"In truth," said he, "it is much my own fault, as he is not only clever in his various stations, but I believe sincerely attached to me; and as he never makes his familiarity disrespectful, I find him sometimes a companion not unamusing to the solitude of my life. It is fit I should tell you he has one very decided cast of character, now fast wearing out in this country; for he is one of the few thorough-paced Jacobites, whom the virtues of the family on the throne have not yet been able to win from the Stuarts. Indeed, he has more than ordinary calls upon his heart for this, and may be forgiven: for he set out in 1745, as a groom to the unfortunate Townley, with whom he was taken at Preston, and with whom he was tried and condemned in London. He was pardoned from his insignificance, but the death of his master he has never forgotten, and never will forgive.

Whigism, therefore, is his abomination, and as commercial people are generally Whigs, they, and commerce itself, are equally out of favour. In other respects he is an excellent creature, and I could, perhaps, even as a humble companion, ill exchange him for many a better-bred person."

De Vere was moved with this picture, and said he could almost envy him.

"Almost as much," added he, "as I am disposed to envy the quiet of his master's solitude, even at my time of life, when, as is supposed, the world has, or ought to have, a right to all our interests."

"That is no more than true," returned the gentleman, "and I should hope (though you have too much pensiveness on your brow for your age) that you have no disposition to renounce these interests. I assure you, though I live out of the world, I am by no means out of humour with it, and seem to return to it with pleasure, whenever a man like yourself comes to visit me."

De Vere bowed, and observed, that with the occupations which evidently employed him, his solitude could never be dull; he only wondered that, knowing the world as he seemed to do, and

not angry with it, as he had just professed, he should have so soon quitted it.

“ I am not so young as you take me for,” replied the gentleman, “ but health and a contented disposition will do much for a man. I thank God, I love my species, collectively and individually ; nor do I think that because there are some knaves among them, the majority are not honest or benevolent.”

De Vere drew his chair closer to the table, and was all attention at this speech. It foreboded, as he hoped, something that might fall in with those speculations on mankind, which, young as he was, had lately so absorbed him.

“ If it were not the most impertinent thing in the world,” said he, “ and could I encourage myself to hope for it, from the frankness and kindness you have shewn me, it would complete the gratification I have met with to-night could I be favoured with the reasons which have inclined you to a way of life, at least uncommon, if not unaccountable. At any rate, I hope I may know the name of the person who so much obliges me.”

“ I have no secrets,” replied the gentleman, “ nor is there a reason against a formal compliance with your request, except the total want

of incident in my, I fear, useless life ; useless to others, though, if I have avoided the temptations of the world by it, it has not been so to myself. My name is Flowerdale, and if you know a baronet of that name in London you are acquainted with my brother."

De Vere blessed himself as in surprise, intimating that he knew Sir William Flowerdale extremely well, and that he even felt under many obligations to him.

"At the same time," said he, "I should have studied long before I could have discovered you to be relations, from any family resemblance. There seems as little similarity of tastes, or, if you will allow me to say so, of character. You are, at least, greatly his junior."

"By ten years," answered the host.

"I should have said more."

"That is because the smoky place which he inhabits, and chuses to prefer to these breezy hills, to say nothing of the care and fatigue of waiting on other men's looks, have, I suppose, oldened him. But I have not seen him these fifteen years, and it is five more since I have been in London. In other respects we are good brothers: he writes me sometimes the news of

the town, regularly supplies me with the Gazette, and I supply him with game. I believe, however, he thinks me a mere country put, and as he will indubitably die in harness himself, is convinced that nobody can live happily out of it."

De Vere thought he did not by any means do justice to Sir William, who, he said, was a gentleman of great prudence, and highly esteemed by all parties.

"Why ay," said Mr. Flowerdale, "it is that prudence that always gave, or seemed to give, him the advantage over me, even more than his age. Our friends used to wish I could take a lesson from him, when I called London a prison which I should not like, though the king were my gaoler."

"But if *he* like it!" observed De Vere.

"I am answered," said Mr. Flowerdale: "a man can but be pleased; and we cannot, indeed ought not, to be all alike. And yet I cannot help sometimes thinking that we are not made to be wedded for better for worse to a toilsome office; nor do I wish to suppose that, as age advances, we may not be something better than one of those old politicians, who

‘ Chew on wisdom past,
And totter on in business to the last.’

Yes! yes! we are made for better things than this.”

“ And yet,” said De Vere, “ as far as I have observed, (even already) it is a nice question whether a man of what we call trammels, when once fixed, can change for the better; at least he may make an ill exchange for a liberty which he does not know how to use.”

“ That observation,” said Flowerdale, looking at him, “ is, with submission, what ought to be beyond your experience. But if true, (which I fear it is,) that happiness is little more than merely mechanical, there is this difference between the man who shakes off trammels to enjoy his mind, and him who ‘ totters on in business to the last,’ that the one consults the dignity of his nature, and acts up to it, while the other reduces himself, at best, to contented mechanism. Take, for example, the man who makes his leisure busy by contemplation, and him who lives in such constant business as to have no leisure but for bodily refreshment. Each may be happy, but whose happiness is the nobler of the two? The one lives and converses with his God;—the other with his club.”

De Vere by no means disliked a sentiment to which, young as he was, he was naturally inclined, but which, from late trials, had begun to take a still stronger hold on him ; and, struck with the easy look of content of his landlord, to say nothing of the brilliant health which belonged to it, he asked him if it were possible that he could have remained during the twenty years he spoke of, shut up in the spot where he now dwelt ?

“*Not only possible, but true,*” replied Mr. Flowerdale : “for it is just that time since I came to the certain knowledge of what would content me, after a thousand petty disappointments in the things which would not.”

“An enviable acquisition,” observed De Vere ; “and I wish I had your secret.”

“At your time of life,” replied Flowerdale, “I should be sorry you stood in need of it. There is, however, no secret except this : *that we know our place*, and do not act as if it were different from what it is. All the rest is plain sailing, and depends upon natural temper and good spirits, or, in better words than mine, a disposition to ‘be contented in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call us.’”

“I never heard the catechism better en-

forced," said De Vere, smiling; "but there must still either be something in your mind different from that of other men, or something felicitous in your history which all other men might envy."

"I fear," returned Mr. Flowerdale, "the mind you compliment is merely made to draw happiness from quietude, and the lesser enjoyments instead of great excitements; my history in regard to events is all negative."

"You lose then, or have never possessed," said De Vere, "the sweet pleasures of prospect."

"Far from it," returned Mr. Flowerdale; "for I thank God, while, from constitution, no man's disappointments ever fell so light upon him, no one ever enjoyed more pleasure from expectation than I have done, and still do. I may be said, emphatically, to have been, and almost now to be, a *man of expectation*, though certainly also a MAN OF CONTENT."

"You move my interest more and more," said De Vere, "and I am glad to learn from this, that you have still the pleasure of some great expectation before you."

"I see I have misled you," replied Flowerdale, "and, indeed, ought not to have expected

to be understood by those who don't know me. In truth, were you old enough to be more a man of the world than you are, I should expect to be laughed at, as I often have been, when I have displayed my treasures of prospect. They are, at least, different from those of most."

"I long to know them," said De Vere.

"You find them at every turn," observed the philosopher (for so we may now call him), "but particularly at this time of the year, or a little earlier, when birds sing, and flowers bud; when corn springs, and our domestic animals bring forth; when every thing, in short, is in the morn and liquid dew of life."

"This is delightful," said De Vere, "and not the less so for being so different from what I expected; for I perceive it is more to the promises of the *natural*, than of the moral world, that you allude. These, indeed, belong to all ages and all stations."

"And seldom disappoint us," added Flowerdale, "or, if they do, we know our consolation, in the submission due to Him who sends so much good, that he can only send evil along with it, for good purposes."

De Vere began to be charmed with his landlord, and begged him to proceed.

“ Yes !” he continued, “ in this point of view, the woods and fields are the very temple of hope. The infancy, indeed, of every thing, is a treat ; and though things always fade, still they are always renewed. The infancy and the hope all pass away, but the certainty of their return does not pass away.”

Then turning to the moon, which, now at full, *illuminated the supper-room through the windows*, he went on : “ I have watched that glorious orb, from her first little segment, scarcely streaking the sky, ten or twelve days’ ago, till now, when I could grow melancholy to think, she will to-morrow be on the wane, were I not sure that in a fortnight more her youth will be renewed. These changes and renewals are the rich presents which the Author of Nature makes us, and occasion us almost to forget that we ourselves grow old.”

He stopped, but De Vere was too much pleased to interrupt him by observation, and he went on.

“ Hence, the mere morning, ushering in the expectations of the day, delights the *Hoper*, whatever its termination. Hence, too, in more active scenes, I never could see, without pleasure, the opening promise of any of my fellow-beings,

before disappointment had checked their alacrity, or given them cause for alarm. How have I watched the joy of a young girl, for example, *just come out; the world at her feet, and pleasure in her eye, because she hoped it would always be so.* How have I rejoiced with a young senator, after his maiden speech; or even a stripling student qualifying himself to make one. These, indeed, have passed away, but others have supplied their places, and wherever I find them, it is still happiness to me to contemplate in them the pleasures of expectation."

De Vere here became grave, and almost cast down, at the thought of what he too had imagined to be happiness, but found so transitory. His host observed it (for he had an eye as quick as it was kind), and said, he feared he might be touching an unpleasant theme, and would change the conversation.

"By no means," cried De Vere, "I am quite interested in this novel catalogue—these pleasures of expectation, and, particularly, as you may suppose, those of opening youth."

"Why, yes!" returned Flowerdale, "it is this expectation, as much or even more than the spring and ~~buxomness~~ ^{lucidity} of the blood, that makes

the remembrance of our earlier days delightful, so that they are emphatically called our *beaux jours*. Never shall I forget the time when I first saw Oxford, and the exclamation of an energetic man, with whom I was travelling. He was my guardian, far from young, a man of letters, an eloquent senator, a complete gentleman. He was also, spite of his years, and the excitements of the world (of which he had drunk as largely as any one) the greatest of enthusiasts."

"The impressions of such a one," said De Vere, "must be worthy of remembrance."

"It was evening," continued Flowerdale, "when we arrived, and the lamps of the students were twinkling far through the casemented windows of battlements and towers rising among groves, which, to him, had always been sacred. 'Happy men! happy men!' exclaimed he, with fervour; 'the world is all your own: the sciences you are mastering will not only administer eternal good to your minds, but at this moment they make every one of you lords of your wishes.' Then, turning to me, 'I would give much,' said he, 'to witness the progressive effects upon them, of the knowledge they are acquiring; but ten times more for the hopes

which each acquisition adds to what they had before. They are all big with the fine phrenzy of Cowley:

‘What shall I do to be for ever known,
And make the age to come, my own?’*

“Your guardian,” observed De Vere, “must have really been blessed with the *mens divini*or; and, for an old man, as you have called him, it is wonderful his enthusiasm could have lasted so long.”

“It did, till his dying day,” answered Flowerdale; “but there are men whose genius never wears out, and he was one, for his body dropped while his mind was still full of fruit. Our greatest living poet, you know, the author of the Night Thoughts, did not begin them till he was near sixty. Why then should we ever give up the dear pleasures of thought?”

“Your friend, it should seem, never did,” said De Vere.

“No; and he had this farther advantage,

* From a note in the Manuscript, it is to be presumed, that the anecdote here related, is not of an imaginary being, but of a high-minded statesman, once very dear to his friends.

that although no man had seen more of the strifes of the world, or had more keenly observed its vices or virtues, somehow or another *he always contrived to excite himself more by its virtues, than suffer depression by its vices.* This is what I love."

"A happy temperament," said De Vere, "and apparently inherited by his pupil."

Mr. Flowerdale bowed and proceeded:—"It certainly formed the happiness of my life, and what is more, for once that I have been deceived in my judgment, I have been a hundred times confirmed in my expectations. This only increased the disposition, which was at one time critical to my fate."

De Vere looking inquiringly, Mr. Flowerdale went on with a pleasure seemingly mixed with melancholy: "Yes; for the mere indication of feelings of kindred with my own, in this respect, decided me, where personal loveliness alone, though equal to the loveliest, might not perhaps have succeeded. It was in coursing the beautiful bank of one of our midland rivers, in a delicious morning in June, so early that the sun had only power to gild, but not to scorch. Our way lay through a succession of happy villages and farms, joyful with *expectation*, and all that

hope which we have been discussing. The air, the landscape, the coolness of the river, the overhanging woods, the song of the birds, the lowing of cattle, every thing was exhilarating; and men, women, and children seemed to catch the inspiring cheerfulness. A young girl, in whose countenance every thought of my own mind played, stood up, and almost dancing even in the carriage, cried out, as it drove briskly over the smooth road—‘The world is a nice place!’

“I could have danced too, and taking her hand, I echoed her. ‘Yes,’ said I, ‘the world is a nice place, and if this be the world, I have no wish to quit it.’

“We two *expectants* afterwards married; and after a lapse of years, passed this very road again; and though we were neither of us then ready to dance in a landau; or call out, ‘the world is a nice place,’ yet we were not tired of it either. We had only exchanged buoyancy of spirits, for happiness more tranquil. In short, so just as well as benevolent is the Author of all, that there is a happiness for all if we please; and I mention these passages merely to mark the *changes*, not the *misfortunes*, of time. Enjoy, then, your youth and spirits while you can.

They will not wait for you. Yet even if you do not catch them as they pass, you may still turn to other pleasures, if you do not cast yourself away."

"*Your lesson is charming,*" said De Vere, his countenance brightening for the first time that day. For there was something so sweet in the philosophy of his host, that he could not help catching a portion of it; and he felt almost ashamed of the gloom which had depressed him. What Mr. Flowerdale, however, had just told him, moved his curiosity, or rather his interest, still more. He hoped for an hostess, yet was afraid to ask, and turned for the first time to the picture of an animated female, which in all the vivacity of Sir Joshua's earlier manner, hung over the chimney, in an excellent light.

Neither gentlemen spoke for some moments. De Vere was obviously suppressing inquiry; which Mr. Flowerdale perceiving, with a placid seriousness, evidently the effect of habitual resignation, he observed,

"You are right in your conjecture; the face you behold is of her whom I have just mentioned, and who, for near twenty years, gladdened my life. It is six years since I lost her: it was the only misery I ever felt; nor can I

be too grateful that God, in taking her from me, gave me the grace to be far more impressed with his bounty in sparing her to me so long, than the ingratitude of repining that he chose so soon to remove her."

De Vere, feeling for the emotions he had unintentionally caused, would have turned to other pictures.

"You need not do this," said Mr. Flowerdale. "I, who contemplate that portrait morning, noon, and night, can well bear to talk of it. 'Tis a countenance which speaks to me still, and I can now let others speak of it."

"Your equanimity and resignation do the heart good," said De Vere, much moved. "Would that many of those I have just left behind me, could witness and profit by them as I hope I shall."

Both gentlemen had risen, and De Vere could not help here grasping the hand of his host with a warmth approaching almost to attachment.

"I will not ask," continued he, "after any of the disappointments which you say you have experienced. Bearing this as you have, every thing ~~else~~ must have fallen an easy conquest before ~~that~~ delightful frame of mind, which nature seems to have given you, and to be born

with which is, I perceive, truer happiness than to be the possessor of millions."

"Neither wealth nor power," returned Flowerdale, "were ever very essential objects with me, though I sought them both. As to the misfortune we have glanced at," continued he, again eyeing the picture, "a perfect reliance on the wisdom, and perfect submission to the will of Heaven, enabled me alone to support it. Nor did I change my place, or fly from any memorial of her, to recover my cheerfulness. On the contrary, it was soothing to me to keep her, in all her avocations, constantly before me. I knew all the sources of her pleasures, and found out all her little charities; and, by making these my own, and perpetually thinking how she loved them—in short, by giving her in idea a perpetual presence, I found that relief which others can only find by banishing such things from their memories. For my part, I felt her enshrined in my heart; and it was not by unseating her there, that I found I could make that heart the lighter."

The two companions here again paused, and De Vere, who had begun to conceive a high veneration for his host, in addition to the good-

will he had from the first conciliated, respected him too much to interrupt his reflections.

At length Mr. Flowerdale broke the course of his own thought.

“Come,” said he, “you want to know the nature of my disappointments. None of them were very heart-breaking. In love I had succeeded; *and of the other great passion of ambition, I had, in reality, too little, to make them, even to myself, other than what they were to others—ridiculous.*”

“Ridiculous!” exclaimed De Vere. “They are not so held in the places I have left.”

“Because,” said Flowerdale, “the passion as you have witnessed it, was probably strong. And there is this peculiarity attending it, that from the impetus it gives to exertion, often generous, always strenuous, what was meant to be a virtue, may become a vice, and sometimes a horrible one, before any one, and least of all ourselves, perceive it. When this is so, nothing presses light upon it. Luckily I had so little of it in my composition, or I had schooled myself so well in independence——” He paused.

“Ay!” cried De Vere, “it is that which I want to come to. To bear with dignity the in-

sults, the cajolery, the falsehoods you may have met with— !”

“ I met with nothing of the sort,” returned Flowerdale. “ I simply did not succeed where, as I took no pains, I perhaps did not deserve to do so. In truth, I was indolent, and justly punished.”

“ I am eager to learn how you will make this out,” said *De Vere*.

“ I like your earnestness,” observed Flowerdale, “ but you will be disappointed in your expectation of adventures, where I have merely to shew my unfitness to undertake them. My brother gave me precepts enough, but I could not follow them, and, as I have hinted, the blunders I made were ridiculous. I never could listen to a long story, even from a patron, if I thought it a dull one. A vile fit of yawning on such an occasion lost me one great man’s countenance ; the asserting my opinion too powerfully in argument, another’s. A third, who wished to publish a pamphlet, asked my free criticism of it, and I made so free a one that I was set down as a blockhead ever afterwards. What is worse, though I had been in the habit of dining with him often, I never thenceforward was invited. I complained to my brother, and he talked to

me of Voltaire, who lost the friendship of the King of Prussia because (to use his own expression) he was tired of washing dirty linen : by which he meant, correcting the king's bad poetry. My brother prophesied that I should succeed as ill as Voltaire, and he was right. I might, perhaps, have got on in diplomacy, but for an unfortunate taste in music and drawing."

"How," cried De Vere, "could such charming faculties interfere with you?"

"I was sent, by my brother's interest, a little secretary to a little German court. One of the princesses was fond of performing in private concerts, and, observing that my ear was very true, insisted upon knowing my opinion of her singing. I told her very plainly the truth. She had science, but no voice, and sang out of tune. She never forgave me; but this did me no harm, till her brother, the reigning prince, who had a love for building palaces after his own designs, submitted one to me for examination, and I pointed out a gross fault in perspective. The court reception became immediately cold, and soon after I was recalled, I knew not why."

“What said your brother?” asked De Vere.

“He sent me the history of Lewis XIV. with the leaf doubled down where the rise of Mansard is described. The great architect, it seems, often *consulted* the king, and sent him beautiful plans and elevations, which would all have been perfect to the minutest particular, except that there ~~was~~ always some one error left, sufficiently gross for the king to correct, and then it came out with a royal emendation. I was not so wise as Mansard. But the abuse of princes, like other general abuse, is a mistake. I have found worth, probity, and even sincerity among courtiers themselves, and the very patrons I had offended had their good qualities, which I did not respect the less because I had blundered myself out of their favour. Was I to condemn them, or *all* the great together, because they might be vain, like myself and all the rest of the world? No! I had myself no spleen because they were not angels. In fact, I soon discovered that almost all characters were mixed. I laughed at the nonsense, but loved the good which I found in them, and I found a great deal. As I have told you, I was not out of humour with the world.”

“ Yet you quitted it ? ”

“ I quitted London, but not the world ; and I did this only to take possession of an estate which gave me a life so agreeable, that without the restraint of what would have been a very foolish resolution about the country, I never returned to town. By this time I was married, and my happiness at home made me indifferent to every thing abroad. In my wife’s mind, I found my own reflected, but I also found that a wife whom I loved, and who loved *me*, did not add to the activity or ambition of a man, not naturally active or ambitious. There was, however, another qualification (if I may so call it,) which enabled me to retire without that hankering after what one has left behind, which is sometimes the cause of unaccountable disappointment.”

“ Your qualification,” said De Vere.

“ I had seen almost all ranks and conditions of men,” answered Flowerdale ; “ and though I by no means say that they disappointed me, on the contrary, many high characters raised my opinion of them still higher, and it is my delight to pay them this tribute, yet—”

Here he paused, as if doubtful how to express his meaning.

“ Yet, what ? ” asked De Vere.

“ My curiosity, or rather that restlessness, which most of us, or at least, most ambitious persons feel, to contemplate the leading characters of the world,—this was satisfied.”

“ So soon ? ” said De Vere.

“ Why, yes ! nor set me down either as too presumptuous, or too indifferent on this account. As to presumption, I by no means am of opinion with the insolent, self-admiring Swift, who used to say, that an acquaintance with great men was only interesting while it was a vanity, and that familiarity, therefore, destroyed its value. Nor do I think, with the same cynic, that so little genius is necessary for a statesman, that there ought to be always even something of the alderman in his composition. This is the mere sauciness of a man who was an absolute peacock about courts and nobles, one who, with no natural right to it, was

‘ Of an unbounded stomach, ever ranking
Himself with princes.’ ”

“ And yet,” observed De Vere, “ we may remember a higher man than Swift, even the chancellor of a great king, and great queen, who, in instructing his son, tells him, ‘ *An nescis,*

mi fili, quanticula sapientia mundus regitur.' And this sentiment is echoed by the sensible and modest Arbuthnot, who was fond of quoting it."

"That," replied Flowerdale, "may do in times so easy that they may be said to govern themselves; but in difficulties, nothing so false; and we idlers ought to venerate those wise and active spirits, who protect us at the expense of their own peace, with no other reward than their own glory."

De Vere wondered still more, with this opinion of public men, that his host should so soon be satisfied with his acquaintance with them.

"I had, as I observed," replied Flowerdale, "that sort of irritating desire to see and know the great professions, and those who are their ornaments, which, while a man feels condemned by the mere inferiority of his lot, to be for ever removed from them, leaves him with I know not what sort of imaginary admiration, almost amounting to envy. This is only aggravated, if his lot be too obscure to render his approach to them easy; and the more generous and aspiring the disposition, the more discontented, perhaps, the spirit which thus languishes. Here, indeed, a voyage of discovery to the unknown land, may be of the greatest use, by sending

us home again with our imaginations undeceived."

"You profited, no doubt, by this interesting voyage," said De Vere.

"I certainly learned," replied Flowerdale, "only to think those men great, who were really so from the superiority of their talents and virtues, and those stations dazzling, which were administered by such men. I thank Heaven, the country possessed enough of them to command all my admiration; while my proximity to the other varieties of mere show and glitter,—little men like myself, and not at all the greater for office, by teaching me their true value, dispelled all ignorant hankering to mix with them. It was this that fitted me for the quiet, which, without disparaging other tastes, I felt to be mine."

"I understand you," said De Vere. "Had you never emerged from the obscurity of a college, or the haunts of middle life, you might, by thinking that all who were above you were, from that mere circumstance, surrounded with enchantment, have been still restless and unhappy."

"Exactly so."

"But how," continued De Vere, with curiosity, "did you settle it with yourself, in regard

to those beings who you allow were so superior?"

"In the same way," replied Flowerdale, "as I settled it that I was not an angel. I *knew* my inferiority, and was reconciled to it. It was only the *enchanted* palace, not the real one, which I destroyed by visiting it. While I was kept out by mounds and gates, guarded by the giants of fancy, who impeded my approach, I could not prevent the workings of imagination, and I figured a thousand pleasures within, which it made me melancholy to believe I was forbidden to think of. '*Major e longinquo reverentia,*' says the maxim. But, the spell once broken, the illusion vanished. Thus to leave allegory, while I found the really great men, so much greater than myself, as to prevent all envy, I found the rest too little different from myself to give me a thought; and this is what I meant by saying my curiosity was satisfied."

"You have made this out completely," observed De Vere, "and it only adds to my envy of that perfect independence of mind, equally removed from pride and indifference, which I never met ~~with~~ till now."

"I am by no means sure," replied Flowerdale, "that pride had not a considerable share in

the philosophy for which you are pleased to give me credit. For when I became master of Okeover, and beheld these old halls and blazoned windows, which record, as I will shew you to-morrow, that an ancestor of mine carried the banner of one of yours, in the thickest of the battle of Agincourt; it is astonishing into what insignificance the little struggles and little people of the world, almost instantly fell."

"But you seem never to have had any struggles, or at least with little people," observed De Vere.

"I ask your pardon," said Flowerdale, "and if I have not yet mentioned them" (here a smile at his own false shame came over him), "it is because the struggle I felt most was so truly and despicably ridiculous, that I was willing to escape the recital."

"I own you excite my curiosity," said De Vere, "yet at the same time I feel bound to repress it."

"Come," said Flowerdale, "you shall have the story, lest you should think it worse than it is—especially as there are no ladies present who might think it invented to satirize *them*."

"There is a lady then in the case," interrupted De Vere, with interest.

“ More than one,” replied Flowerdale, “ one of whom was my wife”—

“ And the other?”

“ A very foolish woman, who perhaps has by this time, disappeared from the stage—Lady Elizabeth Partridge.”

“ I know her,” said De Vere, “ she is alive, and as foolish as ever. But how is it possible she could influence you?”

“ You shall hear. She was a cousin but once removed from Mrs. Flowerdale, on the strength of which, we were sometimes allowed the honour of being let in when we knocked at her door—before Christmas. Nay! we were even permitted to talk to her in company, as her relations—but always, as I observed, before Christmas.”

“ And how could Christmas make a difference?” asked De Vere.

“ All the difference in the world; for then nobody but dry men of business, without their families, were in town. After Christmas, and as people of fashion got together, not only were we scarcely ever let in, but we were talked of by the lady, as a sort of distant connection of hers—she did not know how—but certainly connections!”

“ Good ! ” said De Vere.

“ In an evil hour, and *after* Christmas,” continued Flowerdale, “ some of my patrons, and indeed relations, thought it but seemly, considering our family blood, that Mrs. Flowerdale should be presented at court ; and what does my single-hearted wife do, but, in very simplicity and ignorance of all the ways of silly people, apply, as a thing of course, to her cousin, Lady Elizabeth, to present her.”

“ She did not surely refuse,” cried De Vere.

“ Not only refused,” said Flowerdale, “ but called, in a chair, on purpose to explain her reasons, and put her off from this very mad purpose, as she called it, for ever.”

“ Her reasons must have been curious,” said De Vere.

“ They were offensive,” returned Flowerdale.

“ Though our relationship, my dear Mrs. Flowerdale,” said she, “ cannot be denied, and I am sure I always acknowledge it ; there is a great difference between meetings in a little family-circle like ours, (heaven knows we never were within it) and declaring our connection before all the high world. You surely know, or ought to know, the strong line of demarcation there is between persons of a certain defined rank,

whose rights are every where acknowledged, and those of a doubtful class, neither one thing nor another, who are sometimes tolerated, one does not know how, but oftener refused the notice they pretend to; and it is to prevent your exposing yourself to what might sometimes make you very uncomfortable, that I have, my *dear Louisa*, taken all this trouble in explaining why I cannot comply with your request."

"This is admirable," cried De Vere; yet not concealing some indignation. "But I am impatient to know the result. I trust it was such as might be expected from a woman of sense and firmness."

"I am truly sorry," said Flowerdale, "that I cannot resolve you. For my wife, to make sure of being presented, had written, at the same time, to her friend and schoolfellow, the young Marchioness of Clanellan, then just married, and in all her glory."

"I can conceive a very different reception there," said De Vere.

"You are right," returned Flowerdale, "for she drove instantly to our house with poor Louisa's note open in her hand; and before Lady Elizabeth had well finished her offensive explanations, with a thousand engaging ex-

pressions of kindness, agreed to all that her friend had requested. Lady Elizabeth bit her lips with vexation, and I am almost ashamed to say, the laugh of the two ladies at her folly was heard from the drawing-room before this half-bred woman of fashion could get into her chair in the lobby below."

"This is very fair poetical justice," observed De Vere; "but I am yet to learn how this could affect you in the least, much less be a struggle."

"I am ashamed to confess," returned Flowerdale, "how angry it made me at the time; and that, though I despised my lady cousin from the bottom of my heart, I felt a sort of triumph in beholding the admiration which my blooming and beautiful wife excited, under the auspicious introduction of the Marchioness, in circles which Lady Elizabeth herself was forced to approach with reverence. But this was all false, and unworthy true pride," continued he, "and I soon got the better when I arrived at this retirement, both of my contemptible resentment, and my perhaps still more contemptible revenge."

"I honour you for your self-accusations,"

said De Vere ; “ you certainly had no room for them here.”

“ No, indeed,” answered Flowerdale ; “ for after being settled here a few weeks, with the life we pursued, the contemplation of Nature, and the primitive manners that surrounded us ; above all, with the approximation to Him who is the Author of all, which arises out of a study of his works, and which towns and the ambition of towns cannot teach ; you cannot conceive into what an immeasurable distance from us Lady Elizabeth and all such gentry were finally thrown.”

“ You speak volumes,” said De Vere, “ and the rather, because though you lived out of the world, you say you did not abandon it.”

“ By no means ; for though I retired, it was only on account of this beautiful succession left me by my uncle. I had not lost my interest about my fellow-men. I read of the struggle for superiority among my old acquaintances, even with eagerness, and not the less from feeling myself safe from their dangerous excitements. I was always fond of that engaging sentiment, which, did more men feel, there would be fewer dependant people in the world—
‘ Quis hoc non dederit nobis, ut cum opera nos-

*tra patria, sive non possit uti, sive nolit, ad eam vitam revertamur, quam multi docti homines (fórtasse non recte, sed tamen multi,) republicæ præponendam putaverunt.' ”**

“ This is, as you have called it,” said De Vere, “ an engaging sentiment, and I can perfectly well understand your feeling. But still my wonder is, that you could so school yourself, as to feel any interest at all about the world, if you felt no more.”

“ Your wonder is only natural, and your eagerness as it should be,” replied Flowerdale, “ for if all were like me, the world would not go on. But you will recollect, I was a man, if I may not say of learning, at least of letters; and the witchery of letters, as every one knows, depends upon leisure and happy quiet. There are those indeed, even among men of letters, who may not understand this, for there is a party spirit there too, more bitter and less generous, even than in politics: for which let Pope and Warburton answer, not I. For myself, I am con-

* What is to prevent us, if our country either cannot or will not make use of our services, from returning to that (*private*) life, which many well-instructed men, (perhaps not rightly, but still many) are of opinion ought to be preferred to the service of the state?

vinced that some of the sweetest moments of my life, have been when, after an hour or two spent in reading, or serious thought, I have sallied from my study to breathe in some wild walk, and meditate (assisted by the exercise) on what had so employed and so improved me. At whatever time of my life, or wherever my tent, whether at school or at college; in the beautiful vallies of France, or in a mere cottage garden in England, the effect of this upon the heart has always been the same; the same happy calm has soothed, the same gratified feeling blessed me."

Mr. Flowerdale here finished; and the sentiments and the words with which he concluded, were so congenial to all De Vere's favourite notions, (revived lately in augmented strength,) that he continued some time in an attitude of deep attention, as if he thought his companion was still conversing; reminding himself in this, of that other discourse, (also after a friendly repast,) of which one of our greatest poets has made so beautiful a picture,

"The angel ended, and in Adam's ear
So charming left his voice, that he awhile
Thought him still speaking."

There was a pause on both sides; when De Vere, finding his host had finally ceased, thanked him in the warmest terms for the satisfaction he had given him. "There is not a word you have uttered," said he, "but I shall remember, together with your hospitality, and the almost romantic manner of our meeting."

The great clock in the court yard, here struck one, and both gentlemen were astonished at the quick lapse of the hours.

"The clock strikes," said Mr. Flowerdale, "but I will not here add

' We take no *count* of time
But by its loss.'

You have, however, made me unmercifully egotistical; and though the egotism has been, if I may so say, forced from me by yourself, I must have pity upon the exertions you have made, and let you retire."

At these words, lighting a taper, he conducted De Vere up an ancient staircase, so carved, embossed, and inlaid, that he could willingly have devoted another half hour to its examination, but that his host absolutely commanded a postponement of it till the morning. The two gentlemen then separated for the

night, mutually charmed with a meeting which had given to Flowerdale the only thing he sometimes wanted—an intelligent companion.

De Vere reposed in an old cut velvet bed, in a room wainscoted with pannels, on many of which, were carved the effigies of the Plantagenet monarchs, and some of the Bishops of Litchfield. He was, however, most struck with his dressing-room, which was in fact a retired closet of books, with a sofa and chairs of old turkey leather; and over the chimney were engraved the following lines, which derived greater interest from the recent conversation, still floating in his mind, and not a little from the appropriateness of the place.

“ Ici je trouve le bonheur,
 Ici je vis sans spectateur,
 Dans le silence littéraire,
 Loin de tout importun jaseur,
 Loin des froids discours du vulgaire,
 Et des hauts tons de la grandeur.”

Revolving this, and all he had seen and heard, he sank to rest, pleased with the example of rational independence he had witnessed, and which he was not without a secret wish that he might one day imitate.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOME.

Say, is your tardy master now at hand ?

SHAKSPEARE.

This small inheritance my father left me,
Contenteth me, and's worth a monarchy.

SHAKSPEARE.

LONG and deep were the meditations of De Vere on quitting Okeover Hall, and directing his course through the forest to Talbois, which now seemed more beloved than ever. The cheerful, unruffled content of Flowerdale ; the sweets of his life ; his independence of the world, and the sense of his conversation ; all these dwelt on our traveller's mind. Though eager enough to get home, his reflections on all he had seen and heard so absorbed him, that till within a mile of Talbois, he quickened not the *pace* with which he had set out, but allowed his horse to saunter with the reins almost at command, while he indulged in a variety of thought.

His meditation was intense and important; for the whole of human life, with all its hosts of images, rose up before him, and in an array, it must be owned, less pleasing than, from his age and station, might have been expected. But his disappointments, though chiefly arising from sensibility and high principle, rather than misfortune, had been many; and, as he passed the well known glades of Needwood, which led to his paternal house, he could not help contrasting his present feelings on revisiting them, with those which filled his careless bosom when he became first acquainted with their beauties; that happy time, big with expectation,

“ When oft before his infant eyes would run
Such forms as glitter in the muse’s ray.”

“ I have now seen these forms,” said he to himself, “ but I fear they glitter no longer.”

For the rest of the way, till he was almost within sight of Talbois, he brooded over the conduct of his uncle, his own strange, yet unrepented separation from most of his friends, and, above all, from that lovely and superior being, before whom he had left the world bowing, so as for ever to deprive him of hope, had he ever encouraged any. Yet of this being he could not

help thinking still with tenderness, though to him so unaccountably changed.

As he approached, however, nearer to Talbois, a gleam of satisfaction broke in upon him, which every one has more or less experienced on returning to his *home* ; that magic word which has such a charm in it to all, that he must be lost indeed, to whom it does not bring some comfort. For there is not, in the whole range of moral observation, any thing so pregnant with satisfaction or interest, as the associations that cling to this simple word. Shelter, if not independence of all that may be without, together with the gratification of all the charities that are within, are the general notions which ~~here~~ lay hold of us. These are not confined to any rank, or any nation, to any scale of enjoyment, or any degree of wealth. On the contrary, the more moderate the home, the greater the chance for those peaceful reflections, upon which the whole value of it depends. If ever the poor man *thinks* himself a *man* ; if ever his mind is erect, or his manners softened, it is at home. It is there he feels himself God's creature equally with his master ; it is there that he may laugh at the struggles of ambition, which, if even successful, can give no more than the power he has

already of fancying himself supreme in his own little domain.

Hence it is not marble, nor gold, nor crowds of followers, that form any part of the value of this treasure, but the self-sufficing spirit which it calls up, and which, in a moral sense, equals us with monarchs.

That this is true, is proved by every man who has ever found pleasure in the silent hour, when he shuts out the world to converse with himself. Nor do I know a more enviable sensation than his, who, with his thoughts at peace, turns the key of his chamber upon the struggles of men, and while the lords of kingdoms quarrel with fortune for not giving them a wider rule, says to his own heart, within the precinct of perhaps a few square feet, "Here am I lord of myself."

Something of this sort touched the mind of De Vere, as he now came within view of his own estate, and recollected the many beings, and even inanimate objects which awaited his return. His heart expanded with delight when he thought of his revered parent, and the comfort which the sight of him, after so many anxieties, would give her. Her own pure life, her honourable character, her dignified suffering, and the conso-

lations she had always derived from his filial attachment, took possession of his mind ; yet not so exclusively as to prevent him from thinking of other associations belonging to a place which had been the seat of his high souled ancestors. It was still the abode of unostentatious but determined principle ; and in regard to himself, had been the scene of many a frolic, as well as of many a profitable hour.

The thought of all this, made him quicken his pace, and discard his gloom for happier expectation ; when, approaching the rough forest-gates, which divided his little kingdom from the great empire of Needwood, he was encountered by a dog, whom, by his growl and bushy tail, he immediately knew to be Triton. The animal, on recognizing him, changed all his ferocity to gentleness, and leaped up with joy, in an attempt to lick his hand.

“Thou and thy master, old friend,” said De Vere, “are too inseparable in body, as well as in character, for you to be alone. If thou art here, he cannot be far off.”

In truth, Harelai appeared the next moment, and great and hearty were the mutual congratulations of two persons, who loved and respected each other as cordially as any two men could do,

of such different ages, manners, and views of things.

"You are welcome to your home," said Harclai, grasping his hand, "after a pilgrimage, which, I shrewdly suspect, has not been so untroubled as Herbert prophesied it would be."

"We will not talk of that now," replied De Vere; "tell me if my mother is well, for you come, I suppose, from the moated house."

"She expects you with eagerness," said Harclai, "and you will find her as well as you could wish. Would that all things else were so!"

"Your meaning?" answered De Vere.

"She is aware," replied Harclai, "of the irrespectable conduct of her brother, the falsehood of Clayton, and the extinction of your political hopes."

"And is this all?" said De Vere.

"If there were any *other* disappointments," observed Harclai, "she kept them to herself; but she is evidently uneasy. You are, however, a brave lad, and will not belie your birth.—You will not fail the expectations of this high-minded woman, to gain the proudest princess in Europe."

De Vere was embarrassed, and not over

pleased; for he dreaded the allusion which this indicated, and he was therefore glad to be relieved by the sight of Lady Eleanor herself, standing at the great gates of the moat, and eager to receive him.

The embrace of the mother and son was gracious to both, and did Harclai good.

“If the world,” said he, “often shewed such a sight, I would not abuse it. However, I shall not lose my walk for all the mothers and sons in England. So adieu.” At these words, and evidently by design, he left them to themselves.

For awhile, neither would say much: but it was obvious that much was expected by Lady Eleanor, who had long been informed of, and long brooded over the mental conflicts of her son. Yet the subject was too delicate to force, and, indeed, too unpleasant for either to enlarge upon. To blame her brother’s conduct, both public and private, was the inclination of her mind; but her repugnance to touch upon it, kept her from saying much, even upon Clayton, in regard to whom she was glad to imitate her son in consigning him to silent contempt. But Constance;—the admired, the spotless, the natural Constance!—for her she was all ear, and listened to all that De Vere, recounted of her,

with a sympathy and intenseness of interest which only excited that of her son in a still greater degree. At the same time, she had little comfort from what he told her of the change in his cousin's manner towards him ; and comparing it with the communications made to her by Lord Mowbray, she felt there was but one road for honour to take, and that road she was delighted to find De Vere had already pursued. Without any particularity of communication, therefore, between the mother and son, they mutually understood each other ; and De Vere received her approbation of his design to accompany Mr. Wentworth abroad, as if he had acquainted her in form with all his feeling about his cousin, and she had agreed with him on the necessity for overcoming a hopeless passion. All this passed without a syllable on either part upon the nature or even the fact of his attachment. Such is the approximation of kindred minds.

On other parts of his situation he was far more precise ; and in the course of the day, and when the servants had withdrawn after dinner, he was as communicative as Lady Eleanor or Harclai could have wished ; the latter of whom was any thing but a restraint upon either mother or son.

“I always thought Clayton a rogue,” said his old guardian; “and, for aught I can see, my Lord of Oldcastle is little better. You have, as I thought you would, been beset by knaves; and of the only two men who, from your accounts, promised well, one has sacrificed his power, the other his life, to a vile intrigue; while duplicity and suppleness have triumphed. But you are my own boy still,” added Harclai, “and above them all, whatever the end of it.”

De Vere begged him to control the exuberance of his philippic, assuring him that however disappointed, he was by no means yet prepared to follow him to the desert.

“My maxim,” continued he, smiling, “is the converse of that one of Swift’s, which you used to recommend; for he hated the animal called man, though he loved Tom or Peter; whereas, I love my species, though I may be outraged with particular individuals of it.”

“This is exactly as I would have it,” said Lady Eleanor.

Harclai replied, with a grin, and asked if he had gathered this doctrine from his treatment at the borough?

“Why, even there I found some fidelity

some virtue," replied De Vere; "and in regard to the treachery I experienced, I was more hurt and indignant with the snake that bit me after I had cherished him, than with the needy wretches who had never known me."

"You will, however, see the snake preferred, and bite others yet," said Harclai, "and will come to my creed at last; for

'When vice prevails, and impious men bear sway,
The post of honour is a private station.'

"Yes," said Lady Eleanor, "when impious men *do* bear sway. Mortimer, however, is, at any rate, too young for this; and much as I would have him with me, the comfort and stay of my declining years, he will never forget that he has a country which has demands upon him as well as his mother."

De Vere thought this a good opportunity to open to her his *possible* scheme (he mentioned it merely as such) to join the confederates in Poland, after he had seen Mr. Wentworth sufficiently recovered. Harclai instantly demurred to it, saying there were rascals enough at home to oppose. But Lady Eleanor, though evidently surprised, after looking earnestly at

her husband's picture, said, "that the cause was noble, and that her son should decide for himself."

"I believe," said Harclai, "you were born to be a Volumnia, instead of a kind and gentle mother, for Volumnia herself could not carry it better. In regard to our own citizens," added he, "I only hope our second Coriolanus will succeed better than the first; though, I fear, there is little difference between the citizens of Britain and of Rome, for both are confounded vagabonds. If you want proof, look to the good burghers of Wellsbury."

"I am not sorry for this over-vehemence," said De Vere, thoughtfully, "for it proves you wrong in proving too much. Did you manage your rage with the world better, and not tear it all to rags, I have recently parted with an example of rational retreat, such as would do more for your side of the question than all your virtuous inflammation."

Both Harclai and Lady Eleanor became instantly attentive, while De Vere recounted all his little adventures from Tutbury homewards; and contrasting Archer with Flowerdale, gave so engaging a picture of the latter that Harclai started upon his legs, and looking wistfully at

his hat and cane, and whistling Triton who lay at the door, was ready to set off that instant in quest of a man who, he said, was after his own heart.

“ To him will I,” added he ;

“ ‘ Out of these convertites
There is much matter to be heard and learn’d.’ ”

“ But he is no convertite,” replied De Vere, “ he has no hasty view of the world ; no disgust ; nay, he has even a good opinion of it. Retirement is merely his taste, and in it he acts up to the dignity of his nature.”

“ I must know him,” said Harclai, changing, “ but not now ; he is evidently a tame creature, who will keep cold. There is a difference between the retirement of indolence, and of indignant virtue.”

Then musing a little, he added, “ I suppose now, if I were to propose to him to make war upon the rogues in his neighbourhood of Wellsbury, in order to restore you to your rights, he would not help me, but prefer a walk by moonlight, or being toaded by Mr. John Gorblesstone.”

“ I cannot suffer this,” said De Vere,

"It is downright splenetic," observed Lady Eleanor. "I dare say, with so right minded a man, seclusion cannot have had the effect of reducing him to mere negative virtue. If it has, what will become of your own?"

"The difference between us," answered Harclai, "is plain. Mr. Flowerdale has made himself a monk; while I, though seemingly out of the world, am perpetually in it. *I* know what is passing; *he* only what has passed. I, the tricks of mankind, he the gambols of a kid. Would such a man, think you, venture on the hustings at a contested election?"

"Were there honourable cause for it, I have no doubt he would," replied De Vere; "but I know not why you ask."

"I am satisfied," said Harclai, and became suddenly and mysteriously silent.

Lady Eleanor retiring, the busy-minded humourist immediately resumed, by asking De Vere if he had revealed any part of his own history to his new acquaintance; and in particular, the machinations practised against him at the borough.

"Hardly," answered De Vere.

"And he descends from the old Okcovers?" said Harclai.

De Vere assented.

“Why then he shall soon see me,” observed Harclai.

Accustomed as he was to sudden resolutions, as humour, or feeling (particularly if an indignant one) prompted on the part of his old friend, De Vere scarcely noticed this intimation, and Lady Eleanor shortly afterwards sending for them to coffee, the gentlemen left the eating-room to join her.

On the landing-place of the great stairs, however, hung an ancient map of this unfortunate borough of Wellsbury, which De Vere would have passed in a sort of disgust; but Harclai stopt him to point out the names of the different proprietors of the lands within it, and, among other divisions, a pretty considerable one, entitled, “This is Mr. Okeover’s land.”

“And what then?” said De Vere. “Great part of that land is now mine, with the tenements upon it, and the rest has been recently sold to Lord Cleveland.”

“That I did not know,” replied Harclai, with a disappointed air, and his eyelids, as they always did, when he meditated any thing very seriously, twinkled in great agitation.

The evening passed off with Lady Eleanor

in placid quietness, and in an enjoyment between mother and son, which neither of them had a long time known. The next day saw De Vere on his return to London; but not before he had stopped his horse at Lord Oxford's column, as it was called, before the gates of the moat, and contemplated with peculiar, perhaps with melancholy attention, the inscription we formerly commemorated.* In particular, the device of the decayed old oak, shooting out fresh branches with the expressive motto of "*Inesperata floruit*," filled him with reflections partaking of sadness. "The dreams," said he, "which this device has sometimes inspired, are idle, and ought not to be remembered;" and he pushed on in silence to Litchfield.

* Vol. 1. p. 24.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SCRUPLES OF A MAN OF THE WORLD.

Faith, some certain dregs of conscience are still within me.

SHAKESPEARE.

He has received a thousand ducats from Don John, for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully.

MEANTIME the events which led to De Vere's absence, were almost forgotten in London. The death of Beaufort was no longer talked of, and the temporary secession and illness of Mr. Wentworth, though always a subject of inquiry, gave time to the ministry to breathe. It, in truth, made them feel comfortably easy.

As for De Vere, he seemed blotted out of all consideration, and almost out of memory; or if spoken of at all, it was as one who would never again appear upon the scene.

But this sort of interregnum, gave great scope for Mr. Clayton's powers to shew themselves. Being the now known and admitted adviser of

Mowbray, whatever consequence that nobleman possessed seemed entirely transferred to him ; so that Lord Cleveland, and sometimes even Lord Oldcastle, betook themselves to *him*, whenever occasion required any service from his patron.

This was, in fact, the precise state for which Mr. Clayton was by nature fitted. Undistinguished by any inconvenient superiority of talent ; of little mind, and of most obsequious docility ; a worshipper of title, and a dexterous conveyer of messages ; he was employed in matters of this nature to his heart's content. This made him more and more necessary, even among those who understood something of his character ; (for few could penetrate the whole,) and it might be said, that many of them “ could better spare a better man.”

The consequence was, that Mr. Clayton became a person of real importance in the world. He was trusted, or thought to be so, and this occasioned a court to him which dazzled more eyes than those of his equals, over whom he now lorded it with a sway to which he expected every one to submit. In this, for the most part, he was obeyed ; while those who resisted his sway were, either by open violence or secret machination, sure to be ruined.

Over Lord Mowbray, his empire was even despotic, though still craftily disguised under all proper appearances of outer respect. But it must be owned it pressed heavily on that unfortunate lord; for it was founded on the possession of secrets, which would have exposed him to shame had they been disclosed. Thus had this high-born and wealthy nobleman sunk under the most revolting and bitter of all slaveries, that of feeling himself in the power of his dependant; and while the ascendancy of Mr. Clayton was admired by all, by some it was attributed to the force of his abilities alone.

Lord Cleveland was the only person not in any point deceived. From his own attempts upon the borough, added to his natural sagacity, he had found easy means to penetrate the whole intrigue of Clayton and his patron; and in truth he used it with adroitness to establish a despotism over Clayton himself, fully equal to that which the latter held over Lord Mowbray. In a word, he gave him to understand the full extent of his information, and bound him with it as with a chain of iron.

“ Thus did the course of justice wheel about ;”

and while Lord Mowbray was all pomp and

importance to an extensive and obsequious set of the uninitiated, and Mr. Clayton was considered as the most rising and prosperous young man in the state, the consequence of the one, and the smiles and open exterior of the other, were but ill supported within, by a perpetual fear that gnawed their very hearts.

Such, in too many instances, is the world. We confine it not to the great and powerful, or to men of public life, though of such we are now treating. In all ranks and professions is to be found the secret wretch (well may we call him so), who depends upon another for his fame or safety, from feeling that he has within

“ Crimes unwhipt of justice.”

In short, the whole history of mankind shews that he only is truly enviable who is truly innocent; and not to turn pale at the thought of secret misconduct, is really, what it has been called, the brazen wall that protects the mind. He who has it, let him never part from it; whether under thatch or canopy, it will ever be his richest and happiest possession.

We have ventured upon this digression, because it was in consequence of the discoveries made by Lord Cleveland of the intrigues at

Wellsbury, that he was enabled to put his seal both upon Clayton and his patron, and stamp them as his own ; and it must be acknowledged, considering all things, that his exactions were not heavy. They were, only, that Lord Mowbray should become his devoted follower in politics, under whatever changes might happen, and that Clayton should aid him in keeping De Vere aloof from his cousin, and weakening as much as possible their esteem for one another.

To complete De Vere's ruin with his uncle, followed of course, and, indeed, was no difficult service ; as Lord Mowbray was already sufficiently estranged from him, upon the known principle, that the weak and selfish are always given to hate those whom they have injured. This principle, indeed, Mr. Clayton at first did not seem to acknowledge. Nay, in a fit of that sensibility which sometimes came over him, he protested his horror at any thing that might appear like treachery against his *early friend*, whom, he said, he still continued to love, spite of ill-usage. But, at the mention of ill-usage, Lord Cleveland fairly burst into laughter, and asked him, with a most sardonic leer, whether his conduct to De Vere at Wellsbury had not greatly affected his sensibility ?

“In short, my good and virtuous secretary,” said Lord Cleveland, “fall not into the ridicule of sentiment with one who knows you and the world as I do. Your object is power and fortune, by the quickest mode you can attain them; mine, in addition to power, is love. You know what I believe, and what you yourself have told me, is the obstacle to my success. That obstacle it is even our *duty* to remove: nor do I ask any thing which has not, in fact, good for its end. Such I hold it to be to keep the divine Constance from falling into the hands of a beggar.”

He added, that gratitude to Lord Mowbray ought alone to excite him to this service, as De Vere not only did not contradict, but had himself confirmed a report that he was the favoured suitor of his cousin, and the destined heir of his uncle.

“I am, indeed, glad to find,” concluded Lord Cleveland, “that the lady herself only appreciated her own value, in having actually laughed at the supposition that such a person could pretend to her. This she has done so contemptuously, that I have thought it but right to cause it to be reported to your *quondam patron*, whose gunpowder spirit will, no doubt,

flash at it. But impertinence ought not the less to be made known to the heiress of Mowbray."

Clayton, who had now long turned his back on the ladder by which he had ascended, felt his own spirit flash at the sort of sneer with which his lordship had alluded to De Vere as his patron, and still more at the close and critical observation of his countenance, by which, in the manner of a superior genius, the allusion was accompanied. But Clayton, however unwillingly, also felt he was in the toils of a master-spirit; and he replied, with an air of conviction, that if all this were so, his scruples, which otherwise would be insurmountable to a man of honour, were, in a great measure, removed.

Lord Cleveland again laughed at the word scruples; which only made his slave feel more angry, more humbled, and more helpless. He was also tortured by the bitter mortification which the wicked cannot always escape, when they have pride mingled with their wickedness, and when they know that they are seen through, made use of, and despised, by a wickedness more fearless and towering than their own.

In the end, it was agreed between these excellent persons, that Clayton should inform ^{Grand} Mowbray, not only that the world still

talked, but that De Vere himself was the authority for the degrading rumour. This being settled, Lord Cleveland declared that, with so much discretion and talent for business as Clayton had shewn, he would never rest till he saw him at the head of some important department, perhaps even in the Privy Council itself; a declaration so agreeable to Mr. Clayton, that it even did away the sting of the ever-during sneer with which it was made.

We will not stop to inquire how much of the accusation brought against De Vere, or of the contempt towards her cousin, imputed to Lady Constance, was *believed* by Mr. Clayton. It is certain he had still conscience enough left to feel, or think he felt uneasy (such were his sensibilities) that he was in that ignoble situation, once so emphatically deplored by a rogue with too much conscience, when he exclaimed, "What a miserable thing it is to be but half a rascal!" Reflecting, however, upon the consequence in society of his noble ally, he assured himself it was impossible that he could accuse De Vere falsely; and it ended in his resolving to convey the fact to Lord Mowbray, if not to his daughter, as soon as possible.

Such help does the devil often find in the sophistries of selfishness.

On the other hand, a report was soon conveyed to De Vere, that Lady Constance, on being informed by her father that he had presumed to pretend to her, had treated it with slight, and spoken of himself with a condescending pity. 'Twas a report he could not believe; but, with all his sagacity, he was not yet old enough in the world to treat it with contempt. The scantiness of his fortune made the thing possible in the belief of the world, and, with any other than the modest and generous Constance, probable. At any rate, she had avoided him; and the very existence of the report, though proceeding from others, alarmed his pride. He was more than ever anxious to see his cousin, and he became peculiarly restless, irritable, and uneasy.

But the alarm of Lord Mowbray was infinitely greater at the supposed presumption of De Vere; and he was only consoled by the suggestion of his secretary, that were Lady Constance made acquainted with it, it would so hurt her delicacy, that it would go farthest of any thing in the world, to keep her still more aloof from her cousin, and render her more open to

the attentions of those who could fairly aspire to her.

Lord Mowbray relished this so much, that he not only resolved upon it, but also upon extending the information to Lady Eleanor. "It will cure that foolish person," said he, "of her ridiculous opinions of her son's superiority."

Here, however, Clayton interposed, and ventured humbly to point out the inconvenience of such a procedure.

"It will produce no conviction," he observed, "on such a devoted mother, who will of course communicate it to her son; and your lordship's time, which ought to be given to the state, will be absorbed in fending and proving in private quarrels, which of course will end in no satisfaction."

"You say true," said Lord Mowbray, "it is better as it is."

In the same deference to his secretary, his lordship also complied with his request, not to mention his name to Lady Constance.

"As there seems," said Clayton, "little doubt about the fact, your lordship's authority ought to suffice; and, for myself, I know not

why, but I have the misfortune to find myself so little agreeable to Lady Constance, and Mr. De Vere is evidently so much in her esteem, that it might produce a most serious explosion, in which Lord Cleveland would be compromised, and the whole end frustrated."

Lord Mowbray assented to these reasons ; and felicitated himself on having a secretary, who he said had prudence enough for the cabinet itself.

The communication was soon made ; but strange to say, and to Lord Mowbray's indignation, it was utterly disbelieved by the generous party concerned.

That Mortimer, the most delicate observer of all that was due to woman and woman's fame ; that Mortimer, who seemed born to revive the chivalrous generosity of the days of yore ; that Mortimer, in short, who, in regard to himself, had latterly seemed to watch her only in distance and silence, should thus undermine her fame and give a stab to her delicacy—all this appeared so incredible, that though at first the imputation seemed to swell her heart to bursting, she almost at once recovered, and, with calm dignity, declared the thing was impossible.

“Impossible!” cried Lord Mowbray.

“Yes, my dearest father, some demon has deceived you.”

“Deceived *me*, Lady Constance! and yet I am not usually deceived—I do not commonly speak without authority; and it ought to be sufficient, I think, to say I believe it.”

Constance was affected. Not that she believed it the more for this credulity of her father; but she was grieved, and secretly wondered at the world, when such a man as De Vere could not escape such malicious fabrications. With much duty, therefore, but with much firmness, she asked Lord Mowbray his authority.

“There,” said he, “you must excuse me.” Then assuming that air of dignity which belongs to persons who think themselves in the right, he added, “with what view, my dear Lady Constance, would you wish me to give this authority?”

“Of course, that you might communicate it to Mr. De Vere.”

“Of course, too, you have considered the consequences—the inevitable rupture it would occasion; the—the danger, perhaps blood of one, or of both of the parties—the exposure of your name—the—the—”

“ Oh, my dear father !” exclaimed Constance, greatly alarmed, especially with these last suggestions, “ you need say no more. I retract my question. I see its imprudence, and am content, without inquiry, to be satisfied in my unbelief.”

“ You see, then,” replied Lord Mowbray, half pleased, half affronted, “ an old head *may* sometimes be better than a young one ; and you will give me leave to repeat my own belief of what I have told you, and govern yourself accordingly towards your cousin. By the way, I am glad to hear he is going abroad, even though, with his usual perverseness, in the cause of rebellion.”

Constance, doomed to be more and more astonished, asked the meaning of this last intimation, and learned, with surprise, yet mixed with something like admiration, the disposition (it was no more) which Mortimer had evinced to visit Poland under its then unequal struggle with Russia.

“ It will complete his ruin,” said Lord Mowbray ; “ but with that we have now nothing to do. I am satisfied myself with having thus performed my duty to him as an uncle, and to you as a parent ; leaving your own sense of what is due to me and to yourself, to decide how to act.”

Will any one comprehend the blindness of selfishness, when we say, that in this Lord Mowbray actually believed what he thus said of himself; and, coldly kissing his daughter, and bowing, somewhat stiffly, yet with sufficient complacency at the thought of having secured her deference to his advice, he left her.

CHAPTER X.

MISUNDERSTANDING.

Let your fair eyes and gentle wishes go with me to my trial, wherein, if I be foiled, there is but one shamed that was never gracious; if killed, but one dead who is willing to be so. I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE interview with her father, described in the last chapter, was the most serious of Lady Constance's life. That life had, till now, been placid and equal; and though lately hurried with dissipation, and ruffled sometimes by circumstances, it was the mere transitory uneasiness which modesty and goodness always feel, when made the object of the public gaze. She had been forced, indeed, to decide upon overtures from others, in a manner unpalatable to their feelings; and this, too, had hurt her own for the time. But, the crisis over, no lasting discomfort remained; and the return to cheerfulness

was only the natural effect which will always belong to youth and spirits, when accompanied by innocence.

It was but lately that Constance had ever felt clouded, except from external circumstances. Her disappointment at finding that perpetual gaiety was by no means perpetual happiness, had generated some seriousness; and the talk of the world, as described to her, had made her shrink from the notice of her cousin, like a sensitive plant. Till this moment, however, her energies had never been much called upon, and she now continued wrapped in sad reflection for many minutes after her father had left her. Strange that this seeming princess of the world should be thus exposed to care, amidst halls and bowers, from which, to the common observer, "sorrow flies far."

Under circumstances so new, and, as it might be feared, so afflicting, it was the generosity of her mind that in the end supported her. The noble nature of Mortimer found too close a pattern in hers, to be seriously injured by an accusation which she unhesitatingly pronounced to be groundless. And the consequence was, but a just one to herself; for she rose from her *rêverie*, relieved and satisfied, under a communi-

cation which it was supposed was to overwhelm De Vere with disgrace, and herself with grief.

But though this had completely failed, there is so painful a sensation in delicate minds when they find themselves exposed to the general, perhaps the coarse, comments of the world, that Constance was far from happy. She heard of her cousin's intended expedition, with an interest which was mixed.

"He is no longer to me the same Mortimer that he was," said she to herself; "nor am I the same friend to him. My father wills it, and I must obey my father. Pity he *is* so changed towards Mortimer, but he will no longer look grave upon *me*, when the world no longer talks. Yes, yes; it is right that my cousin should go."

Though this reflection was made with a sigh, the decision of it relieved her from some of the gloom that had come over her mind. The kiss, too, cold and formal as it was, with which her father had taken his leave, awakened in her sensations of filial pleasure, seldom indeed excited, but never raised without holding out to her heart the purest hope of its happiness. This, and her high innate sense of duty, formed, in fact, an anchoring place for her mind; and this will account, too, for much of that decision of

conduct which she presently displayed; and explain a demeanour which, to some readers, may prove unexpected.

That Mortimer was superior to all the young men she had ever seen, her judgment had often confessed. His loftiness, his rectitude, his contempt of every thing that had a shade of that accommodating spirit, which self-interest prescribed to every one around her, and the contrary of which, the universal corruption of the time had made it a fashion to ridicule; all this stamped him in her mind as a person of a higher order, whose caste was by no means diminished by the mediocrity of his fortune. In short, though lowered in all his prospects, she still thought him the honour of her house. But, in thinking so, she had made no surrender of affections, which, as it appeared to her, had never even been sought. So far from this, she even regretted that her cousin was not her brother; a Mowbray instead of a De Vere. Hence, then, she was more open to the effects of a conviction that to think of him in any other light than as a relation, would for ever forfeit her father's countenance; and hence, too, the persuasion which, though not universal among the young women of the time, was with her most peculiarly strong,

that even though a father might be in fault, the character of a daughter would for ever want support, by acting in opposition to him.

“ Ah !” said she, “ let me never be put on my defence where my father is a party. It suits neither with my age nor sex ; nor would the countenance of the whole world heal the wound I should inflict upon myself in wounding him.”

Her merit in this was the greater, because, though the bias of her nature was to love her parent, even with fondness, if he would permit it, she felt too fatally that he did not give the permission ; and thus, a mind that was rich in endowments, and a heart formed to be the abode of all the affections, were left wandering and void, deprived of their best interest, and almost a blank in the scale of existence.

Still her highest pleasure had always been in the pride which she saw her father took in her. That pride, indeed, rather than paternal fondness (so sweet to the child where it exists), was the chief, if not the only sign of pleasure which Lord Mowbray ever shewed in her. But even this was a comfort with which no inclination she had hitherto felt could stand in competition ; and the very notion that she was thought capable of

fostering an affection unsought, and unsanctioned by her parent, affected her in a manner to give her the greatest uneasiness. With all her interest, therefore, about De Vere, she was by no means in his power ; and it was, upon the whole, a relief to these feelings at least, to hear of his intended departure.

But though devotion to filial duty and to delicacy might be said to form the most essential part of Constance's character, and, whenever it came in competition with other feelings, she had neither choice nor hesitation as to decision ; yet she felt not the ease which she wished at the prospect of a separation, indefinite both as to time and place, and pregnant, perhaps, with personal danger. It was not, therefore, altogether without perturbation that she soon after heard a message delivered from De Vere to his uncle, requesting to take leave of him and his cousin before he set out.

This made it necessary to call up all her firmness, and she did it so successfully that, though the softness of her demeanour was resumed, De Vere (for so we are obliged to own) was even mortified at the manner in which she allowed him to take leave of her.

There was, indeed, sweetness in it, because

sweetness was so interwoven in her nature that it could not fail her. But it was not that sweetness which (according to the beautiful thought) seemed, in bidding him adieu, to bid him return. It was too kind to make him accuse her of caprice, but far too self-possessed for him to discover a feeling beyond what relationship warranted.

In truth, whatever we may think or have heard of the power of early bias and secret affection, the predominating rectitude and determination of her character were, in reality, equal to the conquest of even this strong inclination, when called upon to attempt it, as she felt she was, by duty to her father, and respect for herself. It was this, then, that had enabled her lately to be near her cousin, and now to part from him in the manner we have described.

With respect to De Vere, the mine laid by Lord Cleveland, as we before related, had been actually sprung; and however completely he rejected, as incompatible with her lovely character, the malignant report of her supposed contempt, the fact that such contempt of his pretensions, should he entertain them, was felt by his uncle, filled him with uneasiness mixed with resentment. Nor do we disguise that no little

anxiety in respect to Constance herself was the offspring of these uncertainties ; or that his pulse beat quick on entering the drawing-room, at finding that Lord Mowbray was absent, and that for the first time for many weeks he was alone with his cousin.

Her late distance towards him, unexplained as it was, had sent him to the interview in that doubtful mood, which might or might not be appeased—might be all turned to tenderness, or be chilled to coldness, according to the circumstances that arose.

In the commencement he watched her with anxiety, to detect, if he could, any thing like an emotion similar to his own ; but in vain.

“ I go,” said he at last, in answer to her question upon the length and object of his absence, “ too little charmed with what the world has lately exhibited, to be very anxious about my return. I go with the man I most, if not the only man I greatly, admire : nor have I much object beyond being of use to him in his melancholy ; except to forget, if I can, myself and all that has befallen me during the last eight months.”

“ Forget yourself, Mortimer ! forget your friends !” said Constance, with kindness, but of

a sort so collected and ~~natural~~, that De Vere wished it had been less.

“I seem to have no friends,” replied he, “except her I have left at Talbois, and him I accompany.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed Constance, somewhat shaken. “And is this house no longer your uncle’s? And are we relations only in blood? I thought it had been otherwise.”

“Heaven knows I thought so too,” replied De Vere; scrutiuizing her face and manner with an air of composure, which the thought of the change in his uncle, enabled him to assume. “But where the highest interests of the state, are frustrated and lost from changes of opinion, it little boots us to hope that private connections should remain without estrangement.”

“Mortimer,” said Constance, with a look of dignity and softness mixed, “you are not kind to us, or to yourself, in this. God knows I have deplored many things as well as you; but there has been no estrangement.”

And here, spite of her resolution, her beautiful lip would have betrayed that it quivered, had she not turned to the open balcony to conceal it. Recovering, and aided, perhaps, by a feeling that to her at least Mortimer was not

perfectly just, she continued, " You have been ill used, my cousin ; but we will not let you part with us in ill humour."

" I have no ill humour," said De Vere, somewhat loftily, " nor," (and he here felt still more erect) " have I a complaint to make. From some, indeed, I have received injury, in return for benefits——"

" That, you too certainly have," interrupted Constance, but checked herself again, while she thought of her father.

" With others," continued he, " I have been deemed of no consequence, when found without power, after being flattered with notice, under a different impression."

" Those who have acted thus, are beneath you, my cousin," exclaimed Constance.

" In many things, I trust they are," replied De Vere ; " and if there are others still, of a better order, who think I am in the way,—" and he stopped.

" Think you in the way !" cried Constance ; " to whom can you allude ?"

" To those, dear Constance, too near me in connection, for me to wish to go on. I mean merely to observe, that even here, I have too humble an opinion of myself, to complain of

changes, which may, for aught I know, be only deserved, by the presumption I have shewn, in setting up my own judgment against their's. To such, however, it can be of little consequence whither I go, or when I return—and if I never do return——”

“ Dear Mortimer,” exclaimed Constance, here thrown off her guard, and alive to all her father had told her, “ what mean these dark hints? I have heard reports that you mean to espouse, nay, risk your life, in the cause of persons who, my father says, are rebels, and I intreat you to tell me what you mean by never returning?”

“ Merely,” replied De Vere, “ as was once said by another, that ‘ if I be foiled in my enterprise, there will be one shamed, that never was gracious,’ and in the world, I fill up ‘ a place, which may be better supplied, when I have made it empty.’ As for those whom Lord Mowbray calls rebels, his lordship and I may differ.”

“ True, Mortimer,” cried Constance, “ and whatever you determine, I am sure it will be all in honour.” She then added, with resumed firmness, accompanied by a forced smile, “ I have often, you know, scolded you for false

opinions both of yourself, and others. The supposition that you are abandoned, is a proof of it, and sits as ill upon you, as it would upon *me*, whom I know you think surrounded by *friends*."

"You! Constance! You abandoned! The queen of life, or all that in life is worth following! You! the ornament of the court, and the focus of elegant gaiety!"

Lady Constance shook her head, and in truth felt heavy at heart, at observing that the general opinion, which she felt to be of so little consequence to her real well being, had extended itself to De Vere. She was, therefore, only relieved by the entrance of her father.

Lord Mowbray, though he had fixed the hour of meeting, for which he was himself too late, was not overpleased at finding De Vere alone with his daughter; and his look of mistrust, only excited still more the revolting spirit of his nephew.

He was so evidently contemptuous, as well as displeased, that for the moment De Vere both felt and looked as if he abandoned all his tenderness, as well as all his hope, about his cousin; and, with an erect front, stood before them both, seemingly in proud independence.

Lord Mowbray never liked him under this appearance ; and to Constance, it seemed so undeserved, as well as so new, that each of these cousins, formerly such magnets to one another, now really wished the interview to be over. So easy is the progress of misunderstanding sometimes with the best, so prone is poor human nature to multiply its own mortifications.

It must, however, be said for Lord Mowbray, that in addition to his fears of De Vere, he had fears of another kind, which had been cruelly excited in consequence of a discovery of a supposed intrigue that menaced his power. In these moments, he was too little kind to any body to be very benignant towards a man whom he never had loved, and always feared, even before he had injured him. He seemed therefore peculiarly distant and formal, though the ruling subject of his thoughts could not help shewing itself.

“ Young men,” said he, “ are right to travel ; but I could have wished you had chosen another companion. The friendship of Mr. Wentworth is dangerous, and will weigh down any one who has his fortune to make ; as you have found. to your cost.”

“And yet,” said De Vere (eager for his friend, though full of very different thoughts), “no man has such an increasing influence among those whom you suppose, my dear uncle, to be solely intent upon this fortune-making design.”

“Increasing!” exclaimed Lord Mowbray, biting his lip; “and does he really expect success?”

“In his great object,” replied De Vere, “although perhaps not in the acquisition of place.”

“What other object can he have?” said Lord Mowbray, with something like contempt.

“To effect, whether in or out of place,” observed De Vere, “a reform in the rules of action which seem to govern all ranks; to make power more powerful, by establishing it on public opinion; and to give a better bias to public opinion, itself: in a word to make the king what he wishes, and what he is formed to be, the man of his people.”

“Excellent schoolboy visions,” returned Lord Mowbray, in a tone of sneer, alarm, and anger mixed. “Such theories attempted to be put in practice, will ruin the state.”

“They may ruin particular statesmen,” said De Vere, “but they will regenerate public virtue,

of which the state stands so much in need ; and we may then see what the country so much desires, an administration governing *for* the country, not for themselves."

He said this (excited by the subject, spite of other thoughts) with so much animation, that Constance, however averse to these conversations, could not help admiring him. But both her admiration, and his excitement, were quickly lost in the sour looks and language of Lord Mowbray.

" Nephew," said the latter, " you do ill in letting such sentiments escape you. They almost amount to sedition ; and, considering who I am, they seem meant as a personal affront."

" My dear uncle, nothing was farther from my thoughts."

" Perhaps so," replied Lord Mowbray ; " and I am unwilling to remind you, considering all that has been done for you, that to *me*, such conduct is at least not grateful."

" Done for me !" thought De Vere, repressing the exclamation, when he saw that Constance was affected by this speech of her father. Lord Mowbray however was evidently angry, as well as uneasy, ~~and~~ looking towards the door, shewed plainly ~~that~~ he thought the sooner this audience

of leave was finished, the better. De Vere observed it, and tried to find comfort where he had so often met with it—in Constance. But she seemed, from whatever cause, as uneasy as her father. Her eyes were averted and downcast ; and an awkward constraint, for the first time in her life, sat upon the brow of the most open and beautiful countenance in the world.

Except therefore by a slight pressure from her hand, when De Vere finally took his leave, it required far more vanity than his, to believe that he was much above the commonest of her acquaintance. The thought banished his pride, and made his courage sink, as, with a hurried step and beating heart, he left the room. Nor as he passed through the hall, did he notice the respectful salutations of a train of bowing domestics, whom, somehow or another, he had inspired with more than the esteem that is usually felt for a master's friend, by the common herd of London footmen. The porter, in particular, who had known him from a boy, wished him health and success, with an emphasis evidently sincere. To this, so much was he absorbed, he could scarcely reply, but hastened through the square, without looking behind him ; and it was some minutes before he

recollected this part at least of the farewell he had received. He then felt it, from contrasting it with another, and was so alive to it, that, taxing himself with haughtiness, and indifference for what was meant so well, he could have returned to shew his sense of it, had he known exactly in what manner to disclose his feeling.

“ ‘These good fellows,’” said he, “ ‘are capable of attachment, and give me what others, from whom I expected differently, deny me. It is plain that my departure is a relief to my uncle, if not to Lady Constance herself!’”

The thought called the blood to his cheek, and much of his pride returned. He accused his cousin of caprice, of coldness, of injustice; and had he been other than exactly what he was, he might, for a few seconds, have endeavoured to lash himself into an opinion that he had given her a consequence of which she was unworthy. But De Vere was too worthy himself, and too little like Lord Cleveland, in this respect, for such a temper to continue. His resentment (if it had so decided a character) melted away before he got the length of the street which led to his lodgings; and before he got home, he had restored his mind to thoughts more worthy both of himself and of her to whom they pointed.

“No!” said he; “let me not take refuge in the equivocal consolation that she is in fault. It is plain I have no interest in her heart. But that does not diminish her excellence.” Then he added, with a sigh, “She never gave me encouragement. I have no complaint to make.”

This acquittal acted two ways. It indeed forced him to confess that his affection was hopeless. But he had rejected all mean and unjust accusations, which might for a moment have supported him. He had decided honourably by his cousin, and in doing so, he felt as a man of honour will always feel.

And thus, we grieve to say, parted two persons who valued each other, perhaps, even at the moment, more than aught else in the world; and thus it is, that minds the most congenial, and seemingly formed to coalesce in the sweetest union, may, sometimes, by missing the precise moment of explanation, after a slight misunderstanding, separate for ever. Let us learn a lesson from it which may be useful to the proudest heart, and the most delicate sensibility,—that there is no pride so high, nor delicacy so refined, as to be above the aid of mutual concession. How many blossoms of happiness have been shaken from the tree, and

died prematurely, and how much sourness has been engrafted in their places, merely for the want of such timely sacrifice.

Yet, alas ! who, and what are we,—worms as we are in the eye of Omnipotence,—that we should thus sport with the good he designed for us ? If every proud spirit which labours under mistake, would, in its most swelling and “palmy state,” thus whisper to itself, what evils might be spared in the history of man !

CHAPTER XI.

A COURTIER'S FEARS.

Though I am daughter to his blood, I am not to his manners.

SHAKESPEARE.

Why, he stalks up and down like a peacock, a stride and a stand ; ruminates like an hostess that hath no arithmetick but her brain, to set down her reckoning ; bites his lip with a politick regard, as who should say, there were wit in his head, if 'twould out.

SHAKESPEARE.

IN the last chapter we described the parting between Constance and her cousin as a proud one. But, De Vere gone, Lady Constance felt the manner in which both she and her father had suffered him to leave them. The necessity she thought there was to conceal even the subdued regard she had for him, had been strengthened, so as to give her additional courage, by the seeming loftiness of his manner,—which, from her father's entrance, had evidently, though after a struggle, got the better of his tenderness. This kept her in a kind of neutral position ; and

the violence of Lord Mowbray, had afterwards so confused her, that in the actual moment of parting, she seemed almost in a state of indifference.

But her's, after all, was a young heart. Nothing could break in upon her sense of right; but she was not one of those heroines who are so absorbed by high principle, as to be able to assert it without effort, and almost without emotion. She felt, therefore, as the gentle being she was would necessarily feel: and as her cousin's footsteps died away upon the stairs, and she thought of the untoward difference between Lord Mowbray and him, in this their parting moment, she underwent a revulsion, a sort of remorse of spirit, which much affected her. "It was right," thought she, "not to encourage the suspicion that De Vere was a lover; but it was *not* right to let him depart as if he were not a cousin."

Luckily for her agitation, Lord Mowbray, the very moment that De Vere left the room, had returned to the perusal of a letter from Kew, with which he had entered, open in hand, and which, in causing him the most serious alarms, had occasioned much of the splenetic humour he had displayed towards his

nephew. Absorbed in this, it gave time for Lady Constance to recover, and, indeed, it proved a considerable diversion to her attention: for the anxious statesman was in no inconsiderable agitation himself.

With a heart softened by the recent occurrence, and in want of all the support a parent could afford—desirous, too, of giving herself the only consolation which could compensate the exertion she had made in that interchange of sympathy which makes some fathers and their children all in all to one another—how was she disappointed and grieved to find that, whatever was the cause of Lord Mowbray's anguish (for it was no less), it was not from her attempted soothing that he could derive any comfort. Yet, spite of her own uneasiness, she dressed her soft and beautiful countenance in its most endearing smile. She played with his hand, and with her cheek close to his, asked, modestly, but tenderly, if she might not be permitted to know the cause of his trouble.

It was in vain; Lord Mowbray remained fixed in thought, with a knit brow, and a countenance of iron; and, observing that ladies could know nothing of the cares that weighed down

statesmen, desired that Mr. Clayton might be sent for.

“ My dear father,” said Constance, “ you are evidently affected by some untoward business; if you are not really ill; and may I not be permitted at least to share what affects you, though I cannot cure it?”

Lord Mowbray, however, continued in silent thought, and unrelaxed features, for some time; when, regardless of her innocent caresses, he replied—

“ I have often told you, Lady Constance, that politics are above your comprehension. Indeed,” said he, rising, and striding across the room, “ they are above the comprehension of any one, even of those who are admitted into the secrets of courts and cabinets. Storms often arise where least expected; and little wise are those who think office has nothing but sweets, or that office men are always on beds of roses.”

Constance would have retired, as despairing of power to console him, though wondering, and fearful of some new and dangerous crisis. But the agitated earl motioned her to remain.

“ Stay,” said he, continuing to walk the room, and contemplating his red-ribbon with no seeming pleasure. “ Since Clayton is not in the

way, I may as well disburthen myself of what presses upon me ; though you can give no advice in a matter you cannot possibly understand. At the same time it will shew you what some men are."

Rough as it was, Constance felt something like pleasure at this promise of confidence where she so much wished it, and she listened respectfully for what was to follow. In truth, the good lord was too big with his vexation not to hope for some relief by disclosing it, even though it was to a woman, and the secret a political one. But what was the astonishment of Constance to find that the apprehended danger, and all this moralizing upon the uncertainties of place and power, arose out of the conduct of an old statesman, who in every body's opinion had been for ever laid upon the shelf. As he was known to Lady Constance, who, in common with the rest of the world, admired his wit and vivacity, but supposed that age and wrinkles, though they had not extinguished his spirits, must have long dispelled all worldly ambition, she ventured to console her father on this equivocal ground. With one foot in the grave, it could not enter the fancy of the blooming Constance, that such a man could be a subject for ambition to sport

with. She knew not that ambition never grows old.

Lord Mowbray smiled superiority at this simplicity of his daughter ; but observed, not without trepidation, " Alas ! you know not the arts of a hoary politician, when self is in question."

Lord Mowbray, in this, stopped not to consider how blind self may be when it ventures to moralize ; nor did the filial-minded Constance detect it in her father.

But Lord Mowbray went on, and with many hesitations, looking with anxiety during intervals at the letter, which he still grasped, he exclaimed, " Yes ! yes ! he has fire enough left, and cunning enough too, to endanger us, and so Lord Oldcastle thinks. Yet, with his fortune, and high enough in rank, what can there possibly be in mere office that, at such an age, can tempt him thus to sacrifice himself?"

Now, as Lord Mowbray was little more than sixty when he said this, and his dangerous rival near fourscore, we are not to suppose that he could be conscious of any inconsistency in saying it. In truth, his warmth and manner indicated nothing but sincerity even with himself ; nor, ~~as we~~ as we have before observed, was his pupil disposed to seek for any thing else, when

it was her father that spoke. But judge of her surprise, when he acquainted her with the peculiar ground of his fears, which was, that this time-furrowed rival, sought and was admitted, ("no doubt," said Lord Mowbray, "for the low purpose of acquiring favour,") into all the private parties at court; nay, into the very games of the royal children; "and you will be astonished when I tell you of a play for them which he himself has invented."

Constance looking curiosity, her father proceeded to inform her, that the eldest of the young princes condescended to shoot him with paper arrows, till he dropped down seemingly dead, when the joy was for the little prince to kiss him to life again. "This, and hot cockles and forfeits," said Lord Mowbray, shaking his head, "would, under such a man, endanger a stronger administration than ours: nor should I be surprised if Wentworth, and perhaps even your cousin, flown as they are, were at the bottom of it."

Constance thought within herself, how little her father could know his nephew, when he attributed such designs to him; and her respect for the open character of Wentworth equally exempted him from the imputation. In fact, the

death of Beaufort, and the effect this had produced on many characters whom, from what she knew of them, she honoured in the world, had given a shock to her mind, from which she had not recovered; and the present conversation exhibiting (as even her filial reverence could not prevent her from imagining) the most childish fears, was any thing but agreeable to her feelings or her principles. Ambition, indeed, as she had seen it conducted, had already had too sinister an effect upon private happiness, to make her quite so favourable to it as, in her natural sentiments, considering it as a noble passion, she had originally been. We have not denied that she had been somewhat dazzled at the influence which, as a young and elegant female, she was told she might acquire among those who conducted the state; and, for a moment, her love of all virtue, public as well as private, gave her an elevation, to the pleasure of which she yielded. But her modesty first (always the surest index to inform a woman whether she is right or wrong,) and afterwards her judgment, nay, her very pride itself, combined to make her tremble on the threshold, at entering on such a career. There was nothing she thought so little a woman's province as party;

and she looked with little reverence on the busy exertion of a young and beautiful peeress, who with the highest attraction, and all the seeming qualities of a good wife and mother, as De Vere once observed, unsexed herself by becoming the focus of political rage and intrigue. In her feelings upon this point, she had been confirmed by her prudent friend, Lady Clanellan; and she had for some time, on this, as well as almost every other account, wished for the summer to close upon a way of life for which the more she saw of it, she felt less and less fitted. For all these reasons, therefore, though anxious to soothe her father's distress, she was never less disposed to enter into the causes that had produced it; and, but that the afflicted statesman *was* her father, she would have laughed outright at the anecdote, on which his affliction was principally founded.

She was staggered, however, by the authority of Lord Oldcastle, and began to wonder at these lords of the destinies of nations, who seemed to hold their own destiny by so poor a thread that a child might break it. Her excellent judgment, young as she was, had full room for exercise, and she could not help confessing that ambition, as she saw it, was a very different thing

from what the generous but inexperienced flight of her mind had taught her to believe. It was, equally with the luxury and splendour in which she had lately lived, inadequate to all she had hoped for, on taking, as she was told she was to do, possession of the world.

“But where then,” said she, when her conference with her father broke up, and she retired to her closet,—“where is happiness really to be found?”

The thought engaged her in a long contemplation of what she called the nothings that had absorbed her attention for so many months, and her little pleasure in these led her to Castle Mowbray, whence she began to wish she had never stirred. But Castle Mowbray was not to her what it had been during the summer; and, with every seeming blessing upon earth, this young favourite of nature as well as of fortune was any thing but happy.

CHAPTER XII.

DEPARTURE.

What envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east!
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tip-toe on the misty mountain's top.
I must be gone and live—or stay and die.

SHAKESPEARE.

COULD De Vere have penetrated his cousin's mind, during the hours consequent to his last interview with her, it might probably have relieved his own from some of the weight which oppressed it in the moment of his leaving London with Mr. Wentworth. He would not, perhaps, have found there the species of feeling which might have determined his own heart what to wish, or how to act: but he would have seen that the person who he thought had begun to listen to the flatteries of the world, was as pure as ever in her nature, and as free as ever from the tainting effect of those flatteries. The contrary opinion, however, had got a little, a very

little, hold of him, and as his post-chaise drove through Grosvenor-square before five in the morning, and he looked up at the close-shuttered windows of her chamber, he felt an unaccountable heaviness from the mixed nature of his reflections. She was then, he thought, in slumber, jaded perhaps with the vigil of some nightly ball, where all the incense of the state had been offered her, and her only embarrassment had been to decide which pleasure she should most enjoy, or on what candidate for her favour she should bestow most of her notice. At any rate, he supposed her indifferent to any feelings that might be entertained for her by himself; and although he felt a sort of pang at the thought that it would be long before he saw that house, or its lovely inhabitant again (if indeed he might not be taking his last view of it), yet he could not forget his uncle's moroseness, or the insensibility with which she herself had seemed to part with him.

With these impressions, it was with little alacrity of heart that he lost sight of Mowbray House; and though Wentworth was by his side, he threw himself back in the carriage, and drawing his hat over his eyes, neither gentleman spoke a word to the other for many minutes.

Their meditations certainly were not disturbed by any thing from without ; for though all was light throughout the vast city, every thing seemed buried in silence and solitude. The repose reminded one of abandoned Rome when entered by Breunus and his Gauls, so deep and motionless was it, even at an hour when Nature had begun to assume all her gladness with the rising of the sun.

This contrast, which often exists between the cheerful appearance of inanimate objects and the deep rest of man, is, to a contemplative person, always full of interest ; nor, perhaps, of all the scenes on which such a person loves to fasten, is there one more pregnant with philosophic food than this,—the exhibition of a great city at the dawn of day. The myriads which it is known to contain, and is soon to pour forth, are then invisible to the eye, and houses, teeming with life, appear abandoned and desolate. At best they are buried in peaceful forgetfulness, from which it seems almost a pity to rouse them. How many thousands of those who were thus lost in happy oblivion, were soon to awake to care, to doubt, to struggle, or to certain affliction ! Many, however, to joy ; though neither De Vere nor his companion made these

last any part of the visions they indulged; yet with other feelings than those which preyed upon each, the softness of the morning, and the journey before them, might have created very different sensations.*

The sun had been up above an hour, but was now tempered by clouds which had just shed the blessing of a gentle rain on the earth, enough (and no more) to allay heat, and turn every thing to freshness. But the busy dwellers of Whitehall were still steeped in sleep, save, now and then, where an earlier stirrer than the rest had opened his window aloft, to inhale the air. On advancing, however, towards Parliament-street, symptoms of bustle and watchfulness displayed themselves. At first a desultory straggler was seen, with jaded step and night-worn looks, creeping like snail (though with any thing but shining morning face) towards that ominous place of combat, where the fate of nations was

* The modern reader, in the foregoing description of the early dawn in London, may recollect something of the same cast in the novel of Granby; only (as I am most willing to allow) it is better executed in that lively and very agreeable picture of the manners of the day. Nevertheless, as the tone of sentiment is somewhat different, and as it introduces a different course of action, I am content to let this description stand.

often decided, and might be then deciding. Another and another still succeeded, till, at length, whole groupes, by threes and fours at a time, swept the pavement, arm in arm, hurrying faster and faster, in the apprehension of being too late for the question, or anxious with mutual fear at the sight of each other's strength.

These had all been summoned to vote from their respective clubs, where, tired of a ten-hour's debate, they had sought a temporary and feverish refuge. Dim as were their eyes, and furrowed their temples with watching, their countenances still gleamed with what agitated them within; and hope, and doubt, and anxious calculation, and (with many, let us cordially add) real patriotism, excited them all by turns; and this gave a momentary ardour to their spirits, and an accelerating impulse to their steps.

It was a sight which neither Wentworth, nor, indeed, De Vere, could view without emotion. The former saw many of his friends and many of his opponents, as the carriage rolled past them. Amongst these was Clayton, whose quick but solitary pace, and disconcerted air, rather surprised them. He had, in fact, been dispatched to bring up a detachment of hesitating, though general supporters of Lord Oldcastle;

had met with a cold reception from a knot of county members; and was, in truth, ruminating on the coarseness and ingratitude too, of country gentlemen, when, with irregular step, and face full of care, he was thus seen hurrying to his patrons with apprehensions of something little short of mutiny. Both the friends observed the phenomenon, and Mr. Wentworth argued from it, that all was not well with the ministerial party. This, with the eventful discussion which was pending, and his possible power of influencing it, but, above all, the proximity of the scene, staggered his resolution. His hand was several times on the glass, to order the postilion to stop, and his heart beat high at the thought of gallant encounter; when the weakness of his chest, and the solemn promise he had given to Wilmot (of which De Vere forcibly reminded him), turned him from his design, and he too threw himself back in the carriage, that he might not be noticed either by the former companions of his glory, or the rivals of his power.

Having at length escaped by driving over Westminster-bridge, he could not help stretching through the window, to take a view of the House, which reared itself in placid and quiet dignity to the grey morning, unconscious (and it seemed al-

most strange that it should be so) of the agitating scene that was passing within. For Wentworth was but right in supposing that at this moment the doors were closed, and the speaker engaged in the act of putting the question. The thought so got the better of him, that, had he not been a little ashamed of his eagerness, he would have confessed then (what he did afterwards), that though absolutely out of hearing of the House, he mistook the hailing of some distant watermen across the river, for the well known sounds of Aye and No! Such, and so great, on particular subjects, is the power of habitual excitement and local association.

The thought of all that was passing, expanded itself upon his fancy in a variety of images. He recollected all that had happened in this the scene of his exertions, from the first moment he had entered upon it: the consequence he had achieved; his increased and increasing reputation; his early accession to power; his abandonment of it afterwards; the acquisition and desertion of friends; but, above all, the ill-usage and unhappy fate of Beaufort. The remembrance of these was still so bitter to him, that, for a moment he forgot himself: and, attributing the whole conduct of his opponents to self-interest,

he pronounced, with little sense of justice, that all were corrupt.

They were, he said, like the senators of Rome in the time of Jugurtha, who would have sold their very country, could they find a purchaser. In this spirit, no wonder that the exclamation of Jugurtha himself, when he turned round and addressed the city on leaving it, came into his mind; and, taking a last look at the House, as he had now nearly crossed the bridge, he burst out with the African chief,

“*Urbem venalem et mature perituram, si emptorem invenerit.*”

De Vere felt all the poignancy of this exclamation, and respecting Wentworth's emotions, would not interrupt him by contesting the evidently too great extent of his opinion. Yet he hoped that that opinion was not genuine, and that cooler moments would bring back his friend to better temper with some at least of his brother politicians; and though he despised many of them equally with Wentworth, and was little enough in good-humour with public men, particularly those nearest to him, he concluded, as he hoped, that this was a mere sudden ebullition, and was unwilling to despair of

the republic. He watched, therefore, the return of his companion to better thoughts, from which the sight of so many memorials of his recent life, had, for the time, diverted him.

The silence was mutual for some miles ; for De Vere was occupied with other and as keen emotions as those of disappointed ambition ; and it took some time for Wentworth to recover the shock which this mere passage through the scene of former contests had given him. By degrees, however, both resumed their tranquillity, though there was still something melancholy in it, during the rest of the day.

CHAPTER XIII.

EXILE.

And sighed my English breath in foreign clouds,
 Eating the bitter bread of banishment ;
 Whilst you have fed upon my Signories,
 Dispark'd my parks, and fell'd my forest woods,
 Raz'd out my impress, leaving me no sign,
 Save men's opinions, and my living blood,
 To shew the world I am a gentleman.

SHAKSPEARE.

HAD the intercourse between France and England been as easy and as frequent in the time of Elizabeth as it is now, Shakspeare would probably have revelled in the description of an embarkation ; and among the numerous touches we feed upon in his account of human life, we should possibly have to dwell upon the various emotions of that multitude of characters who hurry to the shores of their country, in order to leave it. The boat of Charon itself could hardly exhibit a more motley picture of our wayward nature ; it could hardly contain

more fears, or regrets, or hopes, tender or bitter recollections, or joyful expectations, curiosity, or moroseness, or avarice, or the spirit of intrigue, love, honour, or ambition, than the boat that wafts the restless Englishman to the opposite shore.

With this in view, we will not merely say a misanthrope, but a rational observer of mankind, would do well, for a while, to take a position on the pier of any port of embarkation. The fancy of a Jaques would run riot in it.

But we must not stop to inquire into the thousand exhibitions of the human character which Dover afforded to our travellers, as they seated themselves in the packet. Here an emaciated devotee of the world, in whose service he had destroyed his health, was flying to the sweet south for strength to enjoy it a little longer; there his heir, accompanying him, and secretly wondering (we will not say wishing the contrary) whether he would ever come back. Here an embezzler, with the portfolio of his master, fearing an officer in every man that looked at him. There a wife, in tears and agitation, and already repentant, at having fled from a husband with a lover not to be compared to him. Now they saw a young heir, big

with all hope, the world at his feet ; and now a man driven from society for infamy, envying the commonest sailor boy that scrubbed dirt from the deck. Here was a faded *ennuyé*, flying from himself in London, to be still more tired of the same person in Paris ; there a whole family going to live cheap *en Province*, and obtain a good accent for their younger children. A jilted lover sighed most bitterly in the fore-castle, to which he had retired, with eyes fixed upon the water, though now and then looking at the road up the cliff, as leading to the only thing in the world that could interest him, with all her faults. On the other hand, in solemn state, and most oracular visage, sat an Envoy and his Secretary, just appointed to their first mission at an inferior German court, on which they thought the fate of Europe depended. Two or three Frenchmen sat by themselves, congratulating each other on having escaped from the *pays brutale et féroce*, where the ladies never said a word, and no one could make a good soup.

It were endless to recount the impressions which these and other characters made upon Wentworth and De Vere ; who, at the same time, were themselves as open as the rest to the

investigation of a philosopher. They certainly participated with the most restless of their companions, in their desire to leave England; and it was not till they were full mid-channel, and under the impulse of a favourable breeze, that they seemed to breathe a freer air.

How different from that beautiful, that unfortunate, and then innocent queen, who, crossing this very channel, fixed her eyes till night on the shores she had left, and even ordered her bed to be spread on the deck, that she might behold them once more in the dawn, if the dawn still gave them to her view. Not one of the motley crew of the packet, and certainly not De Vere or Wentworth, were actuated by this feeling towards England.

Yet England was their country, and loved by them both, as it deserved to be loved. It contained all they most fondly prized, though it also contained what had occasioned their disgust. At that moment, disgust predominated; witness the feeling of Wentworth when he was recently so impressed by the scene of his former activity. Indeed there is no saying to what extremity of prejudice the human heart will proceed, under the influence of great excitement, when unregulated by the habit of self-controul.

Out of complaisance to the youth and health of De Vere, Wentworth offered to stay some time at Paris; but, not more to his pleasure than his surprise, De Vere declared against it.

“I care not for its luxury,” said he; “and as for the French woman of quality, she is not to my taste—

‘There’s language in her eye; her cheek, her lip,
Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirits look out
At every joint and motive of her body.’

Oh, how different from what we have let!”

“Yet there are l’Espinasse, and Geoffrin, and Du Deffand,” said Wentworth, not noticing his last observation.

“They are not women,” replied De Vere, “but masculine spirits in petticoats.”

“But their conversation,” continued Wentworth.

“Disappoints me at every turn,” replied De Vere.

“Yet it is full of brilliancy,” said his companion; “of thinking, and even of science and learning.”

“It is on that very account I dislike it: I doubt the thinking; and though I might admire brilliancy for a time, and wit too, if it do

not make them bold, I wish not to be dazzled where soothing and softness are the peculiar fascinations of the sex. It is to these, and these alone, that we fly for that refuge which we cannot find in ourselves."

"You hate then science and learning in petticoats?"

"Why, if I wanted them for their own sakes, I could get them better from the men; if for the sake of any superior attraction, when possessed by females, I could as soon think a coat and waistcoat superiorly graceful from being worn by a woman instead of myself."

"This may be true," said Wentworth; "but if not at Paris, where then is your standard of excellence?"

"Look at home;" replied De Vere, "for how different are the gentle beings we have quitted, where the most excellent sense and the best understandings are accompanied by a retiring grace that never suffers them to overstep their modesty of character."

"Upon my word," said Wentworth, "the English ladies, at least, are much obliged to you; yet, even in England, we have Mrs. Montague."

"And even Mrs. Montague," replied De Vere, "I could love more, if she would lay

down her learning. Beauty, elegance, goodness, all conspire in her to fascinate me; but make her a school-mistress, and the fascination is gone."

"You would not then marry a scholar, though so much more fitted to be your companion? You would prefer one who would talk of silks and laces?"

"If the laces set off her beauty while talking, I should have no objection," answered De Vere; "provided she could also talk of her heart, and that heart was mine. But the sphere of woman's companionship is not so contracted. The virtues, the graces, the accomplishments, that delight and purify us at the same time,—these are all hers; and should I ever be able to marry, these I should seek; but, as to a downright woman of letters, nothing terrifies me so much: I would as soon marry my dictionary."

Wentworth laughed, and the Geoffrins, l'Espignasses, and Du Deffands were given up.

They accordingly left Paris in a few days, and took the road to Toulouse; but stopped in the village of Villette, at some leagues distance from Paris.

There were interests in that village which were enthusiastically felt by Wentworth, and,

young as he was, even by De Vere. With ten thousand faults, the character, life, and mind of Bolingbroke, were favourite and frequent topics of discourse with both the travellers, and Bolingbroke had passed several years of his exile at a secluded chateau in this neighbourhood. The fineness of mind, the high-breeding, and brilliant talents of this statesman; the vicissitudes of his life, his love of letters, his eloquence and philosophic *imagination*, (we dare not call it genuine philosophy) could not be obliterated by those bursts of passion, (amounting to almost phrenzy) which plunged him, now into the grossest debauchery, now into violence, nothing short of treason. He had all the vehemence, but not the virtues of the gallant Essex; and this vehemence, like that of Essex, though often generous, was so ill directed, as to prove his ruin. With parts, which left all other men behind, he was a tissue of incongruity; ever philosophizing, ever sinning against philosophy; praising exile, yet incensed at being exiled; affecting to despise the world, yet a martyr to its ambitions; smitten with the calmness of retreat, yet bursting with party rage. Oh! who can describe him, streaming "like a meteor on the troubled air," beyond all rule of calculation;

admired, and contemned, blamed, hated, and loved.

As he was the very child of political ambition, and, while in office, the model of official merit, no wonder that he had been the peculiar study of a successor like Wentworth; as little, that all things belonging to him should have wound about and augmented the interest with which he was regarded, both by Wentworth and De Vere. Wentworth, indeed, chiefly viewed him as a minister; De Vere as a problem in human nature; both, as a man whose every point of history was a matter worthy of inquiry. Can we be surprised, that their hearts beat high on their approach to what had been his dwelling? It was, in fact, the concerted object of their pilgrimage when they quitted Paris.

The shrine, however, had long been abandoned, and now lay, void of an inhabitant, in a most neglected state. At the end of the village, or rather of a long street, old and massive gates, full ten feet high, opened to what had been the domain. The ancient arms of the family of whom Bolingbroke bought it, cast in lead, still looked respectably, though the rust of time had defaced all other appendages. Nettles, and close matted weeds, obscured what could

be seen of the immediate interior, and entirely hid the borders of a straight-lined canal, so seldom visited as to be the abode of wild ducks. The gates, however, were locked, and all approach forbidden, till a tall thin Frenchman, whose few grey locks were pinned in a bag, and surmounted by a cocked hat (not over new, but decorated with a red cockade), advanced with somewhat of a military air, and, shewing a huge key (a proof of his authority), offered his services in shewing the house.

He had on a thread-bare coat, of a saffron colour, with large sleeves and many buttons, and a waistcoat of the same, with flaps down to the knees; and he did the honours of the deserted mansion with no mean grace. To English matter-of-fact Cicisbeo, he was Hyperion to a satyr.

“Messieurs, veuillez voir la maison de leur Lord Boolingbrooke,” said the Frenchman, who, from the circumstance of being simply entrusted with the key, called himself, and was called by others, Monsieur l’Intendant.

“Yes!” answered Wentworth; “and we should be glad to know if there is any person in the place who can remember him.”

“ C’est moi, qui est cette heureuse personne,” replied the Frenchman, unlocking the gate.

The travellers rejoiced at the event, and would have immediately begun a string of questions on the subject, when a covey of red legged partridges, well fledged, flew up, or rather ran from under their feet; several browsing rabbits scudded to their burrows, and more than one adder crept hissing to his hole.

“ Ah ! les coquins,” said the steward, “ they have not been disturbed for a long time.”

Both the gentlemen hurried towards the house.

’Twas in a dilapidated state, from having scarcely had a tenant from the time Bolingbroke had left it. The immense stone steps, and well carved balustrades that led up to the door, were many of them broken in halves; the door itself, though of huge oak, had lost some of its pannels; and the thick, but decayed rails and small panes of the windows, which composed the extensive and once handsome front, did any thing but keep out the weather. Over the door, however, was seen, in large letters, the inscription of

UBI BENE, IBI PATRIA.

Wentworth was much struck, and paused a minute or two on the threshold, occupied with this sentiment, which evidently gave a turn to his thoughts. Then, expressing his wonder at the neglect into which the place had fallen, the steward could only shrug up his shoulders, but pointed to a marble paved anti-room, which led, he said, to the apartment of Milor.

“Every thing,” observed Wentworth, “that makes us familiar with such a man, is full of interest;” and he hurried into this apartment.

There was a saloon, a bed-room, and a closet with empty bookshelves, the last commanding a beautiful view of a wild and retired forest, from windows full a dozen feet from their high projecting seats to the ceiling. In this room was the only chair to be found in the house, and on the back of it had been painted, though now much faded, a viscount’s coronet, and a falcon, the St. John crest, together with the philosophical motto,

“*Nec quarere nec spernere honorem;*”

which the new viscount assumed, he says, when he was weak enough to enlist a second time under Oxford, but which he thought he most proved in the days of his exile. There was also a reading-desk, which their conductor said had

belonged to him, and on which the same crest and motto were painted.

"True to his theories, at least," observed Wentworth, "he was attentive, even to minuteness, in blazoning his fancied philosophy, wherever he could find room for it."

"Had his practice proved him sincere," said De Vere, "I should not blame him. I am no enemy to the custom of thus feeding one's imagination, where the end is good."

Here they were interrupted by the guide, who assured them, he said, upon authority which he thought unquestionable, that *milor* was *le plus grand philosophe et ministre du monde*, always excepted *mônsieur le baron de Montesquieu*.

Then assuming an air of greater importance, and opening the locker of one of the window-seats, he produced a manuscript book, mouldy with age, and in many parts obliterated from damp, but which was evidently a common-place book, and, as it seemed to Wentworth, in Bolingbroke's hand-writing.

"*Le voila!*" cried the intendant, with increased significance, "*C'est son écriture!*"

Both Wentworth and De Vere hurried to examine it, even before they were told by their guide that it was he who had discovered this only

relic of the great *milor*, and that he had very honestly informed the steward of the estate of it, who, upon the strength of his having been son to the gardener when Bolingbroke lived there, told him he might keep it.

“ I did so,” said the old gentleman, “ and as English travellers often come here, I have found my account in shewing it to them, as I hope,” concluded he, with a low bow, “ I shall to-day.”

The friends were so much absorbed with the manuscript, as scarcely to listen to him, though the book was merely a collection of passages from different authors bearing upon particular subjects, with a few original sentences of the writer's own, afterwards incorporated with his works. Both gentlemen were particularly struck with the following, which they read with avidity, and which brought home to them many reflections, to which even what De Vere, but particularly Wentworth, had seen of the world of ambition, made them peculiarly alive.

“ Similis, a captain of great reputation, under Trajan and Adrian, having obtained leave to retire, passed seven years in his retreat, and then dying, ordered this inscription to be put on his tomb: that he had been many years on

earth, but that he had lived only seven. If you are wise, your leisure will be as worthily employed, and your retreat will add new lustre to your character. Imitate Thucydides in Thrace, or Xenophon in his little farm at Scillus. In such a retreat you may sit down like one of the inhabitants of Elis, who judged of the Olympic games without taking any part in them. Far from the hurry of the world, and almost an unconcerned spectator of what passes in it, having paid in a public life what you owed to the present age, pay in a private life what you owe to posterity. *Write, as you have lived, without passion*, and build your reputation, as you build your happiness, on the foundation of truth.

‘Innocuas amo delicias doctamque quietam.’”

Wentworth and De Vere looked at one another on finishing these passages, each moved by the same sentiment.

“To think,” at last exclaimed Wentworth, “how differently a man can act and write!”

“And yet,” observed De Vere, looking at the landscape from the windows, “may we not suppose him sincere?”

“For the moment, yes!” replied Wentworth,

“and though the landscape is, as you say, delightful, I dare say when he sat at this window, he looked oftenest at the road to Paris.”

“It is certain,” observed De Vere, falling into thought, “his philosophy was merely in his ideas. But they were beautiful ideas, nor can I help regretting that his feeling was merely in imagination when he solaced himself with that charming line which you see he has under-scored, as if he loved it,

‘*Innocuas amo delicias, doctamque quietam.*’ ”

“Yes!” observed Wentworth, “but that he, who was the child of passion, should say to himself, in the very privacy of his chamber, where he must have been communing with his own heart, ‘*Write as you have lived, without passion!*’ Oh! human nature! how admirably canst thou fool thyself!”

“Here is more, and still more marked,” cried De Vere, turning over the leaves, and the friends read on.

“You have fulfilled all the duties of a good citizen, you have been true to your trust, and have pursued the interest of your country; you severed her interest from those of her factions. She reaps the benefits of these services, and you

suffer for them. You are banished, and pursued with ignominy, and those whom you hindered from triumphing at her expense, revenge themselves at your's."

"This is, at least, more practical," observed Wentworth, "and here we worshippers of ambition, as we are called, may find some truth as to our slippery position."

De Vere, all interest, read on.

"The persons in opposition to whom you saved the public, conspire and accomplish your ruin. These are your accusers, and the giddy, ungrateful crowd, your judges. Your name is hung up in the tables of proscription, and art, joined to malice, endeavours to make your best actions pass for crimes. For this purpose, the sacred voice of the senate is made to pronounce a lie, and those records which ought to be the eternal monuments of truth, become the vouchers of calumny."

"A good lesson," cried Wentworth.

"Hear the consolation," proceeded De Vere.

"Such circumstances you think intolerable, and you would prefer death to so ignominious an exile. Deceive not yourself. The ignominy remains with them who persecute, not with him who suffers unjust persecution. But nothing

can affect the man, who, in an healthful body, enjoys a conscience void of the offences ascribed to him."

"Admirable consolation!" exclaimed Wentworth, "but, alas! how often belied by the person who, with perhaps a broken heart, whispers that he believes it, and dies."

Here the ex-minister turned away to the window, and was silent. 'Twas evident he was thinking of Beaufort.

De Vere went on to read another passage, descriptive of the resignation of this extraordinary lover of tranquillity; whose only unhappiness for thirty years was, that he was left to enjoy what he loved.

"I have brought myself to that indifferent temper of mind which only can secure the tranquillity of any person who acts upon the public stage in this country of revolutions. How I envied Lord Peterborough, for being far from home, nearer the sun, and at a distance from faction!"

During the reading of these extracts, and the comments upon them, Monsieur Nicholas, the steward, stood at a respectful distance, with his arms crossed before him in a sort of attitude of resignation, until the gentlemen should have

finished ; when, observing them pause, he asked in the manner in which a Frenchman generally asks for a compliment, “ *Messieurs sont-ils contents ? Mais apparemment ils aimeront voir le Cabinet des Inscriptions ?* ”

At this high-sounding title the travellers looked at one another, and then at Monsieur Nicholas, with surprise, as if not expecting any thing so important in a place so abandoned. But the steward, begging them to follow him, led them to a sort of temple built over a gurgling fountain, which burst afterwards into a rivulet, winding through the grounds. Here they beheld several marbles, on which the overflowings of the mind of this brilliant exile seemed to have poured themselves. Abandoned as all appeared to be, there was an air of romance about the place, which, added to association, pointed every thing with interest. For it evidently was a spot in which the imagination of a disappointed *ambitieux* had brooded, and endeavoured to console itself in the dignity of retreat.

Both gentlemen were particularly struck with a tablet immediately over the shell of a river-god, whence the fountain broke. On this was inscribed the following emphatic lines; descrip-

tive of Bolingbroke's own sense, at least, of the injustice of his fate, and his philosophy in bearing it.

“ Propter fidem adversus Reginam, et partes,
 Intemeratè servatam,
 Propter operam, in pace generali conciliandâ
 Strenue saltem navatam,
 Impotentia vesanæ factionis
 Solum vertere coactus,
 Hic ad aquæ lene caput sacræ,
 Injustè exulat,
 Dulcé vivit,
 H. De B. An.” *

On another marble the sentiment seemed pursued in the following :

“ Si resipiscat patria, in patriam rediturus ;
 Si non resipiscat, ubivis melius quam inter
 Tales civis futurus,
 Hanc villam instauro et exorno :
 Hinc, velut ex portu, alienos casus

* By the madness of an outrageous faction
 On account of his unstained fidelity to his queen,
 And his strenuous endeavour to accomplish a general peace,
 Having been forced to seek a new country,
 Here, at the soft source of this sacred fountain,
 Henry of Bolingbroke,
 Unjustly banished,
 Pleasantly lived.

Et fortunæ ludum insolentem
 Cernere suave est.
 Hic, mortem nec appetens nec timens
 Innocuis deliciis,
 Doctâ quiete,
 et,
 Felicis animi immotâ tranquillitate,
 Fruiscor.
 Hic mihi vivam quod superest aut exilii,
 Aut ævi.”*

“Charming,” exclaimed De Vere, “could we only suppose the sentiment genuine; but I doubt both the immoveable tranquillity, and the happy mind he talks of.” ‘The lady doth profess too much methinks,’ yet there is such charm

If his country come to her senses, about to return to her.
 If not, any where better than among such a people,

This villa I found, and adorn.

Here in safety, as from a harbour,
 It is delightful to look at the dangers of others,
 And the insolent mockeries of Fortune.

Here,

In innocent recreation and learned leisure,
 (Neither desiring nor fearing death),
 I enjoy that unmoveable tranquillity
 Which springs from a happy mind.
 Here during whatever remains to me
 Of life or of exile,
 I live to myself.

in the sentiment, such witchery in the notion of a philosophic independence of the world, that, self-deluded or not, it is interesting to contemplate these effusions."

"What shall we say," said Wentworth, (pondering over the first inscription) "to the political account of himself? Was he right in flying from trial, or would he not have been safe, or at least consulted his reputation better, had he, like the man he affected to despise,* nobly braved it?"

"Party rage," replied De Vere, "is such a monster, that there is no saying; but I allow, as a man of political courage, however inferior in other respects, the firmness of Lord Oxford will ever place him above Bolingbroke."

"St. John is a sort of hero of yours," said Wentworth.

"A *sort of one*," replied De Vere, "though, Heaven knows, for consistency, manliness, and all that constitutes greatness, he had very little of the hero about him. As an ambitious man, from the violence with which he pushed his great passion, and the envy, hatred, and malice he bestowed on the chief he himself had chosen,

* Oxford.

his life can only be useful to shew how the greatest talents and energies, may but prove the misery of the possessor. He was for ever affecting to despise titles and ribbands, as empty playthings; yet his most desperate quarrel with Harley, was for not getting the garter, like him, and, like him, not being made an earl instead of a viscount. A man with that in him which really makes ambition virtue, would despise this."

"All that is true," said Wentworth, "but then for what do you admire him?"

"For the elegance, as well as activity of his mind; for his eloquence, and perhaps I might say, for what always charms a warm imagination, that very self-deluding spirit of romance, which led him to dream at least of philosophy and happiness wherever he was."

"As he evidently did here," observed Wentworth; "nor can I deny the pleasure which this picture of his mind (whether under self-delusion or not) has given me."

"A better master of human nature than he," observed De Vere, "had perhaps made him believe (and I wonder it was not among these inscriptions) that

All places, that the eye of heaven visits,
 Are, to a wise man, ports and happy havens.
 Think not the king did banish thee,
 But thou the king.
 Look what thy soul holds dear—imagine it
 To lie that way thou go'st, not whence thou com'st :
 Suppose the singing birds, musicians ;
 The grass whereon thou tread'st, the presence
 strowed ;
 The flowers, fair ladies ; and thy steps, no more
 Than a delightful measure, or a dance :
 For gnarling sorrow hath less power to bite
 The man that mocks at it, and sets it light.' "

" This is delightful talk," observed Wentworth, " and, as talk, I wonder with you, that this unaccountable person did not leave it as a memorial of his mind. Perhaps, however, the same master you speak of, taught him to answer himself—

' Oh ! who can hold a fire in his hand,
 By thinking of the frosty Caucasus ?
 Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite,
 By bare imagination of a feast ?' "

Both the gentlemen here became pensive, and the thought of all these disappointments in the life of his aspiring predecessor, got such

possession of Wentworth, that he seemed moody with his reflections. He crossed his arms, read the inscriptions once more, and remunerating Monsieur Nicholas, retired with his friend in silence to his carriage. They then resumed the road to Toulouse.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE VICISSITUDES OF PARTY.

Men so noble,
However faulty, yet should find respect
For what they have been.

SHAKESPEARE

THE contemplation of the scene they had left, produced an evident effect on the minds of both our travellers. For some miles they were silent, revolving the dazzling instance of self-deception which the late visit had afforded; but revolving also the extraordinary fluctuations in the life of a devotee of ambition, which the fate of this highly gifted minister exhibited. The subject formed the topic of many conversations, even to the very foot of the Pyrenees. In one of them, Wentworth observed, “had I been Walpole, having restored St. John to his titles and estate, I think I would not have opposed

his complete restoration, nor shut him out of the House of Lords.”*

“I honour you for the sentiment,” returned De Vere; “but Walpole, I suppose, had too much wisdom, as it is called, to be generous.”

“And yet,” observed Wentworth, “generosity, so far from militating against wisdom, even in politics, may be made one of the most powerful, as it surely is one of the most delightful means of governing a state, even through party.”

“I rejoice to hear this from you,” replied De Vere; “you who have so much experience, and cannot therefore, like us visionary people, be led away by mere theory.”

“I am not one of those,” returned Wentworth; “who think that all government consists in mystery; that statesmen, to be such, must always be calculating, always spreading nets, never candid, never magnanimous. On the contrary, I see no reason why the high qualities that elevate private life, should not equally govern public conduct; nay, I am convinced that even with a view to mere self-interest, it

* He was reinstated in every thing but his seat among the peers, where it was thought he would be too dangerous.

were better so. In fact, a character for honesty and generosity will do the statesman more good than all the cunning and coldness in the world. Leave these to the Oldcastles and Mowbrays, and your friend Mr. Clayton, who, at present, find their account in it."

"Agreed!" said De Vere, with great warmth, and conceiving higher respect than ever for his companion. "And yet," added he with concern, "how sad is it to think of the lamentable wreck of so many brave and leading spirits as graced the time when this distinguished exile flourished—Harley and Harcourt, Prior and Swift and Atterbury! But above all, I cannot help feeling a pang for the absolute ruin of that noble house of Ormond, of which so many magnanimous, so many loyal and gallant things are recorded. All of these were thrown down and trodden under foot, without remorse, from the ungenerous selfishness which seems peculiarly to belong to political struggles."

"There is much in what you say," observed Wentworth, (evidently brooding upon the character of his own time) "and in regard to the family of Ormond, I have often sighed over it, and for the same reason as you. I agree with Swift that, in obeying the orders of the queen,

which proved so fatal to him, the son of the high-souled Ossory (who when dead would not have been exchanged by his father for any living son in Europe) thought no more of *treason* against his country, than when he was wounded in her service and the cause of King William. It shocks all justice to think of this wreck. On the other hand, it is mortifying to consider how little comfort this eminent party derived from their own subsequent conduct, or fidelity to one another. In our happy country, where despotism is always talked of, but never exists, a party may lose office, but does not on that account necessarily lose its respectability. It has a resource in its own firmness, its adherence to principle, and the fidelity of its members to one another, which may, if it please, bid defiance to rivals even the most successful. Thank God, there are in Britain no Bastiles, no banishments *à ses terres*; and the sovereign himself often looks wistfully to his opposition, as a protection against his administration."

Wentworth said this proudly; and then, clouding again with his reflections, he added, "But I agree with you in your lamentations over the ashes of this extinct, but illustrious party—embalmed in our memories by what

must ever set it off, and render it an object of our interest—its genius and the band of literary names that belonged to it. Others are known only in the archives of office—these we love in our closets and our libraries. But it is, indeed, lamentable to think how all were broken up, and still more that it was by their own fault. They fell, never to rise again. How does the heart of genius, and kindness, too, beat, when it thinks of the Secretary of State and the ambassador in France, (both the darlings of letters,) writing to one another at the end of an elaborate despatch, as Matt to Henry, or Henry to Matt! How is our hope killed, when we read a few, a very few years afterwards, of the same Henry, writing of the same Matt, coldly glancing at his poverty (reduced in his age from an ambassador to a fellow of a college,) sneering at his epitaph, written by himself, and speaking even of his death as a mere common occurrence.”

Here Wentworth stopped, moved by his feelings.

“I own,” said De Vere, “this is one of many things that have disgusted me with political friendships. And yet Bolingbroke had for ever in his mouth, “*Nulla est amicitia nisi inter bonos.*” As if Prior was not *inter bonos*, as well as himself!”

“ The fate of Prior,” said Wentworth, “ is I own a lesson in ambition, to all who plunge into politics upon the strength of literary talents alone, without the aid of birth, wealth, or connections and without the distinguishing advantage of parliamentary abilities. But even those of the party who had all these, were by some fatality doomed to glitter a little, and then go out for ever. It is hard to think that such a man as Harcourt, illustrious from birth, as well as the great seal, should fall into contempt, and be reviled even by his friends—but more so that Atterbury, whom we so admire as a scholar, and look upon as a martyr to his sincerity in his principles, should also be vilified by the same friends, as wanting in the only qualities which can make a falling party respectable—fidelity. These are sad reflections to the public man, and might really tempt one to fall back upon private life, and dream it away in sweet illusion—often so much more happy than the most successful reality.”

This sentiment surprised De Vere. He had sometimes, young as he was, entertained it himself, but had always fought against it, as visionary, or at least as one he had no right to indulge, till he had seen far more of the business of the

world. But that Wentworth, who had been nursed in that business, himself a minister, and, from opportunity, so close an observer of human nature in all its shapes, should breathe such an opinion, made him wonder. He, however, attributed much to the unhappy event which had deprived him of his friend, had affected his health, and in fact driven him from England; much also to the melancholy reflections inspired by the visit they had just paid; and something perhaps to the wild and secluded scenery in which they were now travelling.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PYRENEES.

Methinks I play, as I have seen them do
In Whitsun pastorals.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE two friends had now entered the Pyrenees; had passed the city of Tarbes on the road to Bagnieres; and, leaving their carriage for the horses of the country, had got agreeably involved in that beautiful succession of vallies,—one surmounting another, but each closed in by rocky, though wooded mounds,—forming a little world of itself, where the news of what was passing among the nations below, was neither known nor cared for. The head of each valley was invariably hid by a wood of pines, through which, as invariably gushed a torrent of the clearest water, forming a stream which filled the whole length of the glen with verdure.

On its banks were regular patches of corn, and maize, mingled among fruit trees, between which, gadded the vine—its ripe clusters hanging in festoons from tree to tree. The cottages to which these belonged, were built of stone, comfortably thatched, and sent forth a race of Montagnards whose well-made limbs and elastic tread, crimson sashes, trunk hose, and Montero caps, (the costume of Henri IV.), while they added to the beauty of the scene, made them look any thing but interested about political parties, or ministers of state. Every thing belonging to them was primitive; every thing within themselves. They sowed, and reaped, spun their own clothing, built their own houses, sung their own songs, and married and were given in marriage, every one, as it should seem, without stirring out of his own valley.

At that moment a groupe of peasants were gathering grapes; others were singing to their tambours basques; others, of both sexes, (the women with flowers in their hair,) dancing under a spreading chestnut.

Both Wentworth and De Vere were in rapture with the scene, and stopped their horses to enjoy it. They were peculiarly struck with the sound and the precision of the tambour

basque, an instrument somewhat like an *Æolian* harp, but larger. It had four strings, but only two notes, (like the kettle-drum) two and two being merely octaves. These the performer sounded with a stick, covered with a mouse, or other soft skin, whence the name of *tambour*, though much softer than a drum. It was played in admirable time, and the effect among the hills was very pleasing. In a few minutes the dancing ceased, and the party sat down under the trees to their dinners of soup, brown bread, and grapes.

The travellers viewed them in silence, and both were pensive, till Wentworth (evidently under the influence of the sentiment with which he had last concluded), exclaimed, "This is somewhat different from *Parliament-street*, as we saw it on the morning of our departure from *London*."

"It, indeed, seems a scene," said De Vere, "in which those illusive dreams you mentioned just now, might be indulged. And yet, I question if a man of the world, whatever his philosophy, even *Bolingbroke* himself (and least of all those heroes of *Parliament-street*), could dream here very long together.

The scene is delicious, but the actors want interest."

In truth, De Vere was thinking of his elegant cousin, and of the contrast between her beautiful manner, and the sun-burnt faces and downright activity of the people before him.

"This from you! You who are so romantic?" observed Wentworth, inquiringly.

"I love my liberty," returned De Vere, "but I love my fellow-men; and to be my fellow-men, they should be like myself, which these good people (no disparagement to their happiness) are not. Had I been born among them, indeed, possibly I might never have quitted them; or, if I had, and were even imbued with some knowledge of other manners, I might, like the honest Hottentot boy, upon getting once more within reach of his sooty kinsfolks, strip off my fine clothes, and run back to the wild haunts of my childhood."

"It is certain," said Wentworth, "that if ever the pastoral spirit which seems to be inherent in our nature, could revive, after being plunged in the exciting objects we all pursue, it would be in such a place as this; and Bolingbroke could never have had better scope for his *Ubi bene, ibi patria*."

With this sentiment, the friends rode on, turning the summit of this beautiful valley, from which they descended into another, through a broad and natural avenue of chesnut trees leading to a picturesque Pyrenean-house at the bottom. It was an inn which they knew was somewhere thereabouts, and of which, in fact, they were in search. What pleased, and not a little surprised them, was the landlord ; a brown and handsome Pyrenean about forty, who had spied them through a glass the moment they appeared on the summit, and who waited their arrival before his door.

He accosted them in excellent English, both as to language and accent.

“ Gentlemen,” said he, with an air and tone, far superior to any Boniface in England, “ you are welcome to La Chataignerie ” (for so the house was called) ; “ I rejoice to see you are English, and your dinner shall be ready in a minute. The moment I saw you, I ordered the trout and eels to be prepared, and you shall have excellent wine.”

As this came from a man in the full Basque costume, trunk breeches, bare knee, a close jacket, and Montero cap, (both the latter of brown cloth,) the astonishment of the travellers

was great, and they hastily asked if he was their countryman?

“I have not that honour,” said the landlord, “but I long knew, and loved the English, as God knows I ought,” added he, crossing himself.

“We shall have an interesting dinner,” said Wentworth to De Vere, as François led the way to a room overlooking a dashing torrent. Here a table, spread with a clean damask cloth, and silver spoons, with the smoaking trout that had been promised, invited them to a repast for which, with all their sentiment, they were very well prepared.

The landlord of course told them his history. It seems, that some six and twenty years before, a Major Stanley, of the noble house which bears that ancient name, (loved and consecrated in our history) passed this way without an attendant, having lost his servant by illness on the road. Struck with the place, he remained some days, and was so pleased with the vivacity and intelligence of François, (then not above fifteen) that he took him into his service with the consent of his father, a peasant in the neighbourhood. The difficulty, however, was to get his own consent, for he interposed a thousand ob-

jections. In truth, young and *espiègle* as he was, the poor boy was already in love, (though she had yet reached but fifteen summers,) with the little brunette, who was daughter of the then landlord of La Chataignerie. But the match was too great for *le pauvre François*, whose father had nothing but an orchard to support him, and many other children. So in the end, François was fain to go and seek his fortune with Major Stanley; and, from his account, many were the tears that fell from his pretty toya, at his departure.

But was she forgotten? Ah! no! François grew up to manhood, and served with his master in England, and on the continent, and saw many pretty girls, but none of them, he said, had such kindness in their eye, (at least for him) as the little Catalina. Well,—by fidelity and attention to his master, he acquired his esteem and gratitude too; for, following him to Jamaica, where the major went with his regiment, and died, François nursed him so affectionately in his last sickness, that he left him a hundred pounds, and all his wardrobe and

* In the Pyrenean patois, a young woman is called Toya.

moveables, which netted two hundred more. François was now rich ; richer than Catalina's father himself ; and what was quite as extraordinary, he was thirty, and still in love. He had an irresistible desire, therefore, to return to La Chataignerie, if only to inquire whether Catalina was alive. He did so, found her not only alive, but single, for she had resisted great offers, she knew not why, from a baker at Tarbes, and a *restaurateur* at Barèges. The cheek of Catalina had lost its freshness ; but this little account made it as blooming as ever in the eyes of François, who offered, and was accepted with joy.

Upon this he immediately changed his fine English clothes for the coarse mountain dress of his youth, and soon became master of the inn himself ;—" where," said he, " I have lived a blessed life without ever stirring from it ; though my chief pleasure is when I chance to receive my dear master's countrymen, as I do to-day."*

So saying he bowed, not ungracefully, and received felicitations on his history, which were sincerely bestowed. It furnished still more food

* This story is exactly true in all its parts.

for the speculations of both the gentlemen,—who admired the romantic site of François' dwelling, and wondered it was not oftener visited by the restless pilgrims of Britain. The landlord assured them he had no cause of complaint, for that during the season for the waters, the Pyrenean namlets were well stocked with travellers, and that many had lately passed in their way to Barèges, and St. Sauveur, towns now not far off.

“We have had,” said De Vere, as they mounted their horses to pursue their way to Lourde, “a beautiful lesson on true natural happiness, unsophisticated by the artificial excitements with which, under our management of them, we contrive to plague ourselves.”

“I wish all the Aristippuses I have seen,” cried Wentworth, “with ribbands and stars on their breasts, but hearts within, worn out and *blazés* with great passions, could have seen this place and heard this story. Bolingbroke's inscriptions are nothing to it.”

To this, De Vere heartily assented, for it flattered all his feelings, and fell in with all his favourite principles; so that, both gentlemen meditated internally over La Chataignerie, long after

they had quitted it. At length, breaking silence, “ I believe,” said Wentworth, “ you knew this good fellow’s history when you talked so emphatically just now of your young Hottentot. At any rate, you see it is not the having mixed in the world that always prevents men from being happy out of it.”

“ It is not I who want that lesson,” answered De Vere ; “ I who am not only untried, but too poor, both in fortune and reputation, to be of service ; though too rich, while I have a brown loaf, to be the hanger-on of a party or a patron. But *you* are different, and, whatever right you may have to complain of particular persons, you have no right yet to live for yourself, and dream away life as you just now talked of doing.”

“ All this is very fine,” said Wentworth ; “ but I fear, if only public virtue were concerned, in my present humour it would not last long. My fear, after all, is, that however we may be delighted with it in books, the imagination of no one is strong enough to keep seclusion warm. I might otherwise leave ambition to those who murdered Beaufort ; yet, I should be glad (if only to solve a problem in the moral history of man), to make the discovery whether it is pos-

sible for any one beyond a certain age, and who has at all tasted of public excitement, to throw it off and be happy with privacy, and nothing but his imagination to gild it. Shew me such a man, and I may still be a dreamer."

De Vere thought of Okeover and Flowerdale, whose history he recounted; but Wentworth rejected it, as not in point. "He was evidently," he said, "a country gentleman, with a good estate, without which, perhaps, his philosophy would not have served him. Besides, you say he was fully interested in the business and politics of the world. This is not what I want. Bolingbroke, indeed, had his favourite maxim of '*vacare literis*.' But this was only secondary in his mind: his real wish, to the last, was for power. What I *do* want is a man of keen faculties, buoyant and active, with spirits under no disgusts, swayed by no other absorbing passion, and therefore fit for the world if he pleases, yet rising above its ambition by sufficing to himself wherever he goes. Shew me, I say, such a man, and as at present disposed, I should be inclined to enlist under him."

De Vere laughed, and said he knew of no such person, but, under such an alternative, would not shew him if he could.

“ He is not to be found,” observed Wentworth, “ and therefore my dream of romance may continue for a few weeks at least, without danger.”

At that moment, they had arrived at the castle of Lourde, high among the mountains, to the governor of which they had letters ; but, on presenting themselves, they were sorry to find he was absent at Toulouse ; and as the only auberge in the place was a poor one, and their horses could proceed no further without rest, they were glad to learn, that by a pleasant walk among torrents and fells, they might easily reach the romantic St. Sauveur. The serjeant of Lourde, who commanded the small party called the garrison, in lieu of the governor, said they would there find an *hôtel magnifique*, and, being famous for its waters, *la meilleure société du monde*. They, therefore, set out on foot, leaving their horses to follow as soon as refreshed.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MAN OF IMAGINATION.

I pr'ythee, shepherd, if that love or gold,
Can in this desert place buy entertainment ;
Bring us where we may rest ourselves, and feed.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE travellers had not proceeded very far when St. Sauveur opened to their view, though at a great distance, and perched up among the crags like eagles' nests. It overhung one of the numerous mountain-torrents that abounded, and was, as usual, backed by a grove of dark pines. The western sun, clothed all the front in splendor, but rendered the heat powerful enough for a pair of fatigued and hungry pedestrians to wish to avoid it. By entering the bed of a river, now almost dry, they thought not only to do this, but to escape a hill. Accordingly, they pursued a goat-path worn within the channel, till they came to a sort of natural shrubbery,

beyond which, voices were plainly heard, though the speakers were hid from view. Again their own language struck their ear; but it did not now so much surprise them, as in the instance of honest François, who had, indeed, apprised them that they might meet many of their countrymen among these mountains. They pursued the sound; though Wentworth observed he had little wish to trench upon the perfect freedom from English associations, for which he had come abroad, by renewing among these unknown countrymen, the reminiscences of home. “We have enough of them,” said he, “in ourselves.”

As their way, however, lay directly through the party, they were obliged to proceed, and soon came within sight of a tent pitched among the shrubs, close to the banks, where glided the mountain stream which they had pursued. Here, broader and fuller, it furnished the fishermen with some of that excellent trout with which almost all the Pyrenean rivulets abound. The voices had ceased, but they now heard the tuning of a guitar, as if in preparation to accompany a song.

Indeed, on the outside of the tent, lay other musical instruments,—as a French horn, and a

clarionet, intermixed with two or three fishing-rods, nets, and some baskets with plates, unfolded napkins, and cut bread—indicating that there had been a repast within the tent. A tethered mule, with panniers, was feeding not far off.

Presently the guitar, being perfectly in tune, and a voice cleared with a few hems, a well-known song in English arrested the attention of the friends, who looked at one another as if astonished at the appositeness of the sentiment to their late conversation.

“ Under the greenwood tree,
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note,
Unto the sweet bird’s throat—
Come hither, come hither, come hither ;
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to live i’ the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleas’d with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither ;
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.”

Neither the voice nor the accompaniment were of an ordinary musician; and the effect upon both Wentworth and De Vere was peculiar, not indeed so much from the music as the sentiment. In ancient days, they would have thought it a warning, and become superstitious. As it was, they were both much impressed, and confessed they could scarce have thought the coincidence possible.

Their discourse (for they were now close to the tent) brought out some of the company, which consisted of a person who seemed the master of the feast, and another, both evidently English; two French gentlemen, and two ladies. One of the latter was also French; but the other, the musician (for she was not yet disengaged from her guitar), from a mixture of English manner with foreign features, left it doubtful to what country she belonged.

The gentleman who appeared the host, and was dressed in a green coat with short skirts, red waistcoat, and both coat and waistcoat bound with a narrow gold binding, now advanced to reconnoitre, when the travellers began to apologize if they intruded, stating how they came there. The gentleman, who had great good humour as well as vivacity of countenance, said he had

started out thus abruptly from hearing his native language spoken so close to him, "though I might," said he, "have supposed that it was some of my countrymen from Barèges, who often do us the honour of a visit. However, you will give us the pleasure of taking some coffee after your walk. I expect my servants with it from a hut close by, which is a sort of cooking place."

Wentworth complimented the gentleman on the agreeableness of his amusements, and in particular on the music they had heard,—looking at the lady, who had by this time untied the ribband which bound her guitar.

"It is a favourite song of mine," said the gentleman, "both for the melody and the thought: the latter particularly; or, perhaps," added he, with a sort of frank significance, "I should not at this moment be here. But come," (observing from the air and manner of both his guests that they were not common persons,) "you ought at least to know who it is that has the pleasure of receiving you. My name is Rivers, of Northamptonshire; and the lady there, who gave us the music, is, luckily for me, *my* lady, Mrs. Rivers."

He with the same vivacity named his other

guests; and then with good-natured politeness, left the travellers to tell their names, or not, as they pleased. Wentworth having shortly recited them, the party now proceeded to a wide spreading elm, which covered them all over like a green tent. Here a man-servant in livery, and a very pretty *soubrette*, with a head dress formed by a silk handkerchief of many colours, becomingly disposed, served up the fuming repast. At the same time, two peasant lads, having climbed into a cork tree, higher up the wood, sounded the French horn and clarionet, which the travellers had seen on their arrival, in a beautiful melody, which was pleasingly echoed from the opposite hill.

The whole of the original party seemed gratified; but somehow or another, both De Vere and Wentworth were grave. They were indeed pleased with the scene; and they were forcibly struck with the animation and intense pleasure which Mr. Rivers seemed to take in it. He also did the honours, if we may so call them, of the valley of St. Sauveur, with all the science of a painter, and all the enthusiasm of a poet; and he wound up one panegyric on a particular piece of scenery, made more sublime by the approaching dusk, by saying that it always brought him nearer to heaven.

“But the whole country,” said he, “together with the freedom of life which it affords, are such as make most other modes of living contemptible.”

De Vere looked at Wentworth, as much as to say he had at last found the man he was in quest of; and the mental employment of both, in applying the scene before them to the subject of their late conversations, produced pensiveness more remarkable from the alacrity and feeling of Mr. Rivers, in every thing he said and did.

His eye, indeed, was generally “in a fine phrensy rolling,” which could scarcely escape the most obtuse observer. It certainly was not unheeded by either Wentworth or De Vere, to whom he became more and more a subject of examination. Of this, however, he was wholly unconscious; though, had he been the reverse, it would probably have made no difference; so much did he seem to throw his heart, or at least his imagination, into whatever subject he was upon.

In their walk to the town of St. Sauveur, Wentworth ventured to ask him, if he preferred these mountains to his own country; and if he were not curious to know what was passing there.

“Why, yes!” said Mr. Rivers; “though I have not been in England for some years, I am

still, and ever shall be, an Englishman. I love the soil, and the people ; though they are slow, and not easily kindled to enjoy that taste for natural pleasures, which God has given to all of us, if we knew how to use it."

De Vere watched him, and was struck with the vivacity with which he said this. The contrast, too, between the vehemence of Mr. Rivers's manner, and the silent sensibility of his wife, did not escape observation. She seemed to hang on all her husband said, with a pleasure not the less visible, because not expressed in language. It had "an understanding but no tongue." In truth both Wentworth and De Vere were struck with the speaking expression of her countenance, and the elegant *tourneur* of her shape and mien, which forcibly, and with mixed feelings of melancholy and pleasure, reminded De Vere of one who was, under every speculation, seldom out of his thoughts.

"I would give something," whispered De Vere, "to know this man's history."

"We may, perhaps, obtain it in time," replied Wentworth. "Wilmot, you know, prescribed desultory loitering wherever we chose ; and I never felt so disposed to loiter."

In fact, the travellers were soon established

at the *hôtel magnifique* of the French serjeant at Lourde, which was, in truth, a comfortable house. Mr. and Mrs. Rivers shewed them all attentions; and both Wentworth and De Vere, while studying the characters of their new acquaintance, forgot their late speculations on ambition, and even ambition itself, for many days.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MAN OF IMAGINATION TELLS HIS STORY.

Never did young man fancy
With so eternal and so fixed a soul.

SHAKSPEARE.

THERE is no intimacy which grows so quickly as that contracted by fellow countrymen in a stranger land. Mr. Rivers soon found out, without being dazzled by it, the quality of Wentworth, with whose reputation he was familiar, and the high blood and connections of De Vere, with whose accomplishments and opinions he was much struck.

On the other hand, it was discovered, that Mr. Rivers had himself once been intended for public life; and was actually well known to the world as the author of some beautiful sonnets, which had charmed many readers. This awakened the curiosity of the travellers still

more ; and as he was of a free, warm, imparting disposition, in a few days they obtained from him the history they wanted ; if that can be called history, which relates rather to the workings of a strong imagination than to any activity or usefulness of life.

It was brought about one evening, after Mrs. Rivers had retired from the supper-table. Wentworth having learned that Mr. Rivers was the kinsman of a person of consequence in a former administration, under whom he had actually been initiated in business, expressed his astonishment that he had not continued to pursue that career.

De Vere expressed no astonishment, but was, if possible, more earnest than Wentworth himself to know what had induced the change. The French and the English friends who had been of his party, when the travellers first met them, were also of this, and added their wishes to know something of a story which they concluded could not be without interest, though it might be without adventures.

Won by these united intreaties, Mr. Rivers complied, and thus continued the conversation which led to it :—

“ I have told you that I have not what is called

succeeded in the world ; to be sure, as far as the hopes of success were concerned, I was, even in boyhood, the most unpromising creature that ever lived. As a child, my nurse-maid said, I took every thing by the rule of contrary. I would neither eat, nor sleep, nor learn my letters, except as it suited my fancy ; and once, one evening when I was scarcely in breeches, and they wanted to put me to bed, I was found, after a long search, in a nest I had been making for myself under a Portugal laurel. There I had actually intended to pass the night ; the birds made nests, and why should not I ? My father and mother laughed at it ; and I could not comprehend why I was so scolded by Deborah, except that the moss and damp had quite spoiled my clean trowsers.

“ It was the same at school ; I got my lessons when it suited me, and was flogged when it did not. Evening school (I speak of the first I was at,) I could not bear. We were on the borders of a forest, and I loved so of an evening to walk in a forest.

“ If my voluntary reading pleased me I went on with it, instead of writing exercises, as I ought to have done, and finished the exercises when I might have been playing at cricket. If I do the

business I am obliged to do, thought I, what signifies when I do it?

“ I was but ten years old when I became acquainted with this beautiful country. My father’s health made it necessary for us to go to Bagnieres de Bigorre, not far from hence. Perhaps it is the most charming spot in Europe; but what I chiefly remember it for was its delicious figs, and the market-girls who sold them. They used to run after me, calling me ‘*leur petit Anglois, aimable enfant,*’ *et cætera*, but always ending with ‘*Ah! que j’ai de bonnes figues; Achetez à moi, joli petit cœur.*’ Their figs, and compliments, and short petticoats, and crimson head-dresses, are still before me, and made an impression I shall never lose.

“ There was an orange-grove, half a league from the town, that had belonged to an old monastery then in ruins, and had a garden and fountain, which were my delight. The gardener let me do as I liked, and eat his mulberries or play with his doves without scolding. He was pleased with my sprightliness; and he said that, except for my love to lie still on the turf, content with merely breathing the perfume of the air, I ought to have been a French boy. To this wild place I was allowed to go at stated

periods, as a reward for behaving well. I went on a boriquo, while my father and mother drove in a calesh. How delightfully sleepless was the night before the party ! The place filled my infant imagination, and excites me still.

“ We returned to England, but my character returned with me. At Winchester I seldom went to the hill, but in play-hours played truant, to walk to the neighbouring villages, stopping at cottages, or even ale-houses in the road, to hear any tale that might be told, but especially if the relator or the facts were out of the common way. By degrees, this generated a taste for extracting amusement from passing scenes or characters, no matter what : if they were pleasing or prominent, well ; if not, my fancy made them so. I afterwards became a poet, and the sonnets which you are pleased to mention with approbation are the mere glass of my mind, such as it was then.

“ I remember when this sonnet-making genius first took me. There was an arbour of sweet-brier in a neighbouring gentleman’s garden, and nothing would serve me, but I must compose an Ode to Nature in this arbour. I knew the gentleman, and might have got leave well enough ; but to steal there unknown was the

thing. One morning in July, with the birds chirping, and the sweetbrier smelling, and all my genius awake, I was seized by a pair of rough hands belonging to a clown of a gardener, who never cared for an ode in his life. He thought I concealed myself to steal the gooseberries, and was for dragging me to his master. I was afraid of the ridicule of the discovery, (for he had also seized my ode), and, though only thirteen, I resisted with all my might. The consequence was, before I got away, a good beating, and the loss of my ode, which was read and laughed at by the whole town. But as I had escaped unknown, I never acknowledged it.

“ This was at thirteen : two years after, the taste proved a little more inconvenient. I was invited for the holidays, by an old man who had been a friend of my father, who was now dead. He had not a relation in the world, and gave out, that he intended to make me his heir. I went with joy ; but he was a humourist and a miser, and locked up himself, his servants, and me, in our bed-rooms at eight o'clock. It was summer, and I did not like to go to bed at eight in summer. So I made a rope ladder, and escaped to play the flute in the fields, and eat raspberries

and cream with a neighbouring farmer, whose daughter had the whitest skin in the world.

“ I was discovered, and sent back in disgrace, and the will was altered. But my mother forgave me, considering the reasons ; indeed, she had a spice of romance herself.

“ ’Tis certain, that I scarcely ever took a walk which I called, and perhaps intended to be, a solitary one, but I turned it into-as much busy occupation as a Dutch picture : for I seldom returned without something like an adventure ; some new acquaintance, some other man’s, or other woman’s history, (I always liked the last best,) some danger run, just enough to be not quite disagreeable ; perhaps some little distress relieved, which last, (ah ! that the instances had been more frequent,) always sent me home to a happy rest. ’Tis true, imagination gave the zest to all, and whether I was benighted, and shared a peasant’s supper, or, as has been the case, dined with a squire of high degree, whom I had never seen before, every thing was delightful, for every thing was romance.

“ At college !—but I wish I could pass over that eventful place, for there I was enchanted, honoured, and disgraced ;—the world it opened, ravished my very soul. I was surrounded by genius, and the works of genius. Every man

who had a spark of it, was an idol to me : every grove an Athens.

“ My Winchester lore told well, and I gained the prize for Latin verse. This made me resolve to stand for a Merton fellowship. It required study, and I remained a whole long vacation to read. Accordingly I passed all the mornings among my books. In the evenings, I diverted myself with riding, or walking among the villages in the vicinity. Once, I was seen by a rival candidate, dancing in a barn. He made the most of it, and the fellows who were to decide the election, looked shy. But this was not the worst.

“ Every body knows Bagley wood, near the city. It is usually full of nightingales. But it was frequented by other beings as well as nightingales. Their calling was impure, and their company disgraceful. The proctors resolved to clear this wood, and one unfortunate night, when I was there, it was beset by a posse of constables. I declare to heaven I was there only as a votary of the muse and of the moon. But the Dogberries made no distinction. I was dragged before the magistrates in common with a number of low people of both sexes ; and though I escaped being committed as a rogue and vagabond, I lost my fellowship.

I afterwards redeemed myself, and resumed my old habits.

“ Of course I was laughed at, but I laughed in my turn. Let those laugh that win ; and I always won, for I was always more or less happy. To be sure I was often deceived, ah ! how often ! A stream, which at home I had thought a lovely brook, when I had seen others, seemed nothing but a ditch. An old man in a soldier’s coat, whom I went a mile out of the road, to shew to an inn, and promised to treat, in return for the story of the battle of Lafeldt, picked my pocket by the way. The rascal told me he was the grenadier in a picture of Lord Ligonier ; that he had sat for it ; and I believed him. When I came to see the picture, he was no more like it than my dog.

“ Then Belinda ! she had seemed to me to combine all the virtues, and all the graces, only because she was a pretty girl, and played the spinet. When I visited her again, after having been at college, and in London, she turned out to be a country dowdy ; and I saw her without a sigh, consigned to the arms of an honest, butter-making farmer, to whom she made an excellent butter-making wife.

But what of this ? For the moment I believed

all that my feelings told me ; and I never could bear to be convinced, at least at the time, that I was wrong.

“ Strict abstract truth, the realities of things as they may appear to an angel, are not within man’s power, at least not in mine. The whole world is but a dream. Do you think I admire the colours of the rainbow less, because I am told there is really no colour in it ? And what if I do know the truth of things, will they on that account please me more, or so much, as my fancy makes them ?

“ At the time I was speaking of, my father was dead, and the estate was mine ; but my mother, whom I loved, lived in the manor-house. It was necessary to choose a profession : for my fortune, though competent, was by no means sufficient to occupy me. Besides, as my mother, who was a sensible woman, observed, an idler is not respectable, even though rich. You have parts and powers, she said, and so I had ; but I knew not where they lay, and still less, with such a disposition, how to employ them.

“ I had a huge desire to see the world, and read voyages and travels wistfully ; I even thought of the sea. But luckily I was always

sea-sick, and sea-sickness and romance do not agree; besides there is no sentiment on ship-board; a great deal of honour, but no roses. Gallant fellows! they deserve all their rewards. I bow before their superior energies; but these energies were not mine.

“ I thought of the army, and might have gone into the guards. But I found that wandering as a soldier's life sometimes is, it was not the sort of wandering I affected. In short, wandering in company with a whole regiment, and, above all, under command, did not suit me. Perhaps I should not have minded it with a set of gypsies.

“ We had great relations, and my mother applied to one of them to recommend me to a great man for employment. He was a great man himself, and made me his secretary, *en attendant mieux*. But he was of opinion, with Sir R. Walpole, that poets made bad men of business, and were fitter for speculation than for practice. He warned me of this, and fairly told me if I continued silly (as he called my romance), he must leave it to romance to promote me.

“ I accepted the conditions, and went to court, which dazzled, and, for a little while, pleased

me. I fluttered about, and sunned myself in smiles, all but those of my patron, who was too matter-of-fact for me.

“ My first quarrel with him was, that he seldom went into the country, and when there, always wanted to get back again ; yet had the cruelty (which I thought tyranny), to send me sometimes to town about business, in August, while he remained behind :—though I knew he could not enjoy himself.

“ His notions of a country seat were such as might be expected. What misery, on laying down a book to wish for a stroll in a flower garden, yet have to walk a quarter of a mile for it, and then find the door locked.

“ But he cared little for roses, and was always among his papers ; and (strange, as I thought it), wanted me to be so too. This want of ideality discomposed me, and I thought myself in every thing but power and riches (trifling ingredients) above him. He is in trammels, thought I, with all his honours ; he is ever behind the throne in the House of Lords, or under the gallery of the House of Commons. He cannot, like me, light his lamp to Ariel or Oberon, or the field of Shrewsbury, or Bosworth ; nor if the weather be soft, can he shut up his papers, and fly to

the forest. It will be seen that I fled there too often.

“ I did not dislike, nay I even liked London ; but it was chiefly because it prepared me the better for the country. I laid in store of ideas ; I contemplated artificial elegance : I gained an insight into artificial character, and I then flew, with tenfold alacrity, to the enjoyment of liberty wherever it took me. Rough nature pleased me the more, because I knew its contrast. But nature, rough or smooth, was what I wanted. In town every thing was masked. This may seem to afford greater scope for the imagination, of which I am a votary. But no ! there is nothing to spring from ; no original spark to set all in a blaze. For a man of the world, London is charming ; but, spite of my lot, I was not a man of the world.

“ How I always loved Gray's Ode, who, in a twilight walk, used to think he saw Parnassus in every hill, and Aganippe in every fountain. What was it that did this ? Fancy ; and twilight, which permits Fancy to work. Broad day, or the hum of a town, would have destroyed it in a moment. But I had more fancy even than Gray, though not so good a poet ; for even in broad daylight I could often see Hebe's cheek

in a milkmaid, and fairy steps in a town meadow.

“Think not, however, from what I have said, that even towns can give no play to the fancy. Many would say the fancy is there best exercised. It is certain that she flutters much, (I will not say most) in courts and feasts. When I have seen my patron’s niece, Lady Anne, sweeping by in silken sheen, with lace and diamonds, and waving plumes, I have thought her a princess, and gone home and dreamt of her as such. The next day I have found her in a mob cap. The illusion was gone; but I was happier while it lasted than unhappy at its being dispelled: so on the whole I gained by it.

“Perhaps you will call me mad; but does Bacon write madness when he says there is a natural, though a corrupt love of falsehood, that gives pleasure. ‘Truth,’ says he, ‘is an open *daylight*, that does not show the masks and mummeries and triumphs of the world, half so stately and daintily as candle-light. Doth any man doubt that if there were taken out of men’s minds, vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, and imaginations, as one would, but it would leave the minds of a number of men

poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition ?”*

“ This was my creed ; and I did not repent it, though my patron and kinsman told me I should never do, and *reminding* me of my conditions, talked of my quitting my employment.

“ I heard it with great independence ; nay, with something like contempt. Shall I own the truth ? All the time the lecture was going on, a pot of wallflower smelt so sweet under my nose, that the country, in beautiful pastoral, rose before my eyes. While Sir John talked of docketing letters, I was thinking of making hay ; while he referred to Downing-street, I was upon the banks of the Dee ; and when he mentioned parliamentary eloquence, I was dreaming of the nightingale. It was this that gave me a sort of elevation of spirit in my reply, which absolutely astonished my patron. His astonishment reached its height when I took him at his word, and said I would quit his service.

“ We did not quarrel, and I thought Lady Anne squeezed me tenderly by the hand when I took leave of her — there certainly was a tear in her eye, and I wrote a sonnet upon it.

* Bacon's Essays, Art. Truth.

“Restored to liberty, I added what I could to my mother’s jointure, and reducing myself to what I thought a competent allowance, I escaped to the lake of Geneva, on purpose to row where St. Preux had rowed with Eloise to the rocks of Miellerie. I found no trace of him : but the place did much, and fancy the rest. The realities of Rome, have not interested more than the mere illusions of these scenes. Yes ! divine Jean Jacques ! I have followed thee in thy dreams with a pleasure which none but a kindred dreamer could feel. I have sought thee at Charmettes, and tracked thee to Savoy. My heart has beat in the same places as thine. Thou art one whom I could for ever admire ; thy carelessness of the future ; thy confidence in the present ; thy fond imagination, and the enchantments of thy sentiment—all make me bow down before the altar of thy genius, and adore thee as an Indian adores the sun.”

This apostrophe, uttered with upraised hands and kindling eyes, for a while stopped the enthusiast in his narration. Some of the company caught a little of his fire, and the French gentleman was delighted with it, and complimented him upon his feeling. De Vere also had been particularly interested by other parts of his narra-

tion; and though he felt that, with all his imagination, Rousseau was a scoundrel, he feared to express an opinion, lest it should interrupt the story. Wentworth had watched the whole with fixed attention, and entreated the speaker to proceed.

Mr. Rivers went on. "I roamed about the Alps, and pursued the object of my devotion to Chamberri; where, however, I could not help wondering that a man even of imagination could find play for it and compose letters, or any thing else, while in the sensible contemplation of nothing but chimney-tops and house-tiles. But Rousseau was the prince of imagination.

"I returned to France, and roamed on foot through the delices of the pays de Henri Quatre; and thence all over the Pyrenees, on the Spanish side as well as this. My warmth of fancy never left me; every smuggler was a condottieri, every priest a troubadour. It is certain that I many a time loitered to hear a guitar, until I knew not where to sup, and have actually slept in my cloak at a cottage door. But remember, this was the climate of roses, of warmth, of geniality, (to coin a word) of which we poor Saxons in vain endeavour to form an idea.

"Once, after having consumed a whole day in

exploring the Pic de Midi, where I had seen nothing but the Iserre, a roaming wolf, or a distant lake, I began to long for a shelter wherein to pass the night. It had now closed in; but I knew that the moon would soon rise; and, as I had continued descending, till I had got to the base of the mountain, I hoped quickly to find what I wanted. I was not disappointed, for the moon getting a little above the horizon, by illuminating two or three cottage casements to the east, shewed me I had returned to the haunts of men. It was the hamlet of St. Elmo. I looked for some little auberge, such as the smallest village in England generally affords, but could discover none. It did not disturb me, for by experience, I knew I might trust to the good nature of the people. I only stopped to ascertain, by outward appearance, at which habitation I had the chance of being received with least inconvenience. With this view I leaned over the gate of a little orchard, and for a while enjoyed the lovely freshness of the herbage. All was silent; but suddenly the silence was broken, not disagreeably, by the sound of a fife playing at a distance. The tone was now merry, now grave, but chiefly the former. This was quite enough to put me in motion; so entering the

gate, I directed my steps to the opposite hedge, whence the sound came, and found three or four young lads, and as many girls, in the basque dress, who had left their supper to enjoy a dance by the light of the moon.

“ It had just ceased as I came up, and I heard the fifer, with a tone of commendation, and superiority at the same time, saying to a young girl, ‘ *Vraiment tu as bien fait ma belle ; presque aussi bien que nous autres, n’ayez pas peur. Mais continuez,*’ said he, addressing the whole party ; ‘ *vive la dance ! viva la gioia !*’ With this he resumed his fife, and the little troop prepared to renew their sport. I was at a loss whether to break in upon them by shewing myself, or to go back to the house, and make my wants known ;* but I could not help stopping to remark the young person who had been the object of the fifer’s commendation. I, however, could discover nothing, though the lights in the sky grew brighter and brighter, except that she was remarkably graceful, and moved in beautiful time. I never longed so much for a dance in my life.

“ Not knowing how best to announce myself, I put my flute together, and made a second to the air to which the party were dancing, which

by no means had a bad effect. But it stopped them, and all came towards me at once with curiosity, but not rudeness. One of the young men, indeed, the fifer, (who seemed to preside), exclaimed, ‘ *Que diable, que veux tu !* ’ But it went no farther, particularly when I told them I was a stranger who loved music and dancing as well as they ; was benighted, and knew not where to find refreshment. But I observed the young girl retreated hastily to the house. I was soon discovered to be a foreigner, and when I had announced I was English, I found it did me no harm ; and an old lady, who had by this time joined the party, and seemed the mother, or at least the person in authority over all, told me in very good French, unmingled with *patois*, that as there was no inn, I should lodge where I was.

“ Nothing could please me more ; so I was willingly ushered into rather a spacious sort of common room—in fact, the kitchen, round which two or three doors led into smaller rooms, where the family slept. One of them, in which there was no despicable bed, was allotted to me ; and, mean time, a clean wench, who was the only servant, began to prepare a supper of eggs and legumes, for Monsieur. But as this would take

time, (and time allotted to pleasure is always precious in France) the young fifer, who, to do him justice, had as much vivacity and alertness as any of his countrymen, proposed they should take one more dance, with the addition of my flute to his fife, if Monsieur would condescend. The smiles of two or three young girls, who shewed their white teeth very prettily in seconding the request, would have made me comply at any time; but I hoped for a dance myself, and looked round for the fifer's nymph, with some disappointment at not finding her among them. He had himself gone in quest of her, but returned with a mortified air, mingled too with a little resentment, at her refusal to return. '*Cette petite chose, Zerlina,*' said he, angrily, '*veux tu la croire? Elle fuit la modeste.* She won't dance any more,' said the fifer, 'and I was teaching her to dance so well.'

" 'Perhaps,' observed the eldest female, to whom he addressed himself, and who was his sister, 'you were too rough with her, Jacques; you know I always told you she was not made for roughness; *elle est trop delicate, pauvre fille, outre ses malheurs.*' Jacques gave her a look, at first angry; but afterwards softening into great seriousness, he added, '*Oui, tu, as raison, Jac-*

quelinc ; et moi, comme toujours, j'ai tort.

With that he flung out of doors, and we heard no more of dancing that night, for Jacques seemed the life and soul of the party.

“ By this time my little supper was ready, and I sat down to it with appetite enough ; but somehow or another I could not help thinking of Zerlina, and was only consoled by the hope of seeing her in the morning.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MAN OF IMAGINATION CONCLUDES HIS
STORY.

Thou, dearest, Perdita.....
 Or I'll be thine, my fair,
 Or not my father's, for I cannot be
 Mine own, nor any thing to any, if
 I be not thine.

SHAKSPEARE.

“ Nor was the hope disappointed ; for as the family were all cottagers, though at their ease, they could not afford separate apartments, still less separate meals. I was delighted, therefore, to find all my hosts (Zerlina amongst them), seated on a stone bench under a luxuriant vine, at their cheerful early breakfast, made still more cheerful by the freshness of the morning. To be sure, the repast was at first but of brown bread and goat's milk ; but not only was I accustomed to that, but it was soon reinforced by *œufs frais*, and a *tasse de chocolat*, which I found was meant for me. The romance of the thing gave the whole scene a zest, which more

sumptuous entertainments to me often wanted. But who would have thought of the quality of a breakfast, or even of breakfast itself, when Zerlina was there ?

“ She arose with the rest on my approach ; and while they all opened in little babbling compliments, she made me a silent but so graceful a courtesy, and the courtesy was accompanied by such a blushing air of retiredness, and yet, as it seemed to me, it was so polite (if I did not even think it so high bred,) that my interest, already much on the *qui vive*, was all her’s in a moment.

“ She was the clearest brunette I ever saw ; and full of expression, at least I made her so, which is the same thing. She had the finest turned arms, and wrists, and hands ; and her head was as well set on her neck as a statuary could have wished. But even if it had been ill-shaped, the gipsey had contrived to set it off with a crimson silk net, the tassels of which were intermixed with a profusion of her dark tresses, in a manner so piquante that there was no keeping one’s eyes off it. Then her shape, form, figure, action, oh ! they were inimitable. I cannot tell you, Sir, how soon and how entirely she got possession of me ; and yet without speaking a word.”

De Vere would have smiled, had not some too interesting recollections come across him ; so contenting himself with saying, he could perfectly well understand this, Mr. Rivers continued. “ But she set herself off so by her dress ! I cannot describe her dress ; but you shall see it in her picture, as I sketched it, though it was no more than that of a Pyrenean Paysanne. It was a simple boddice of black silk, laced with crimson ribbon, and having a stand-up collar in the nature of a ruff, which left open a graceful throat, ornamented by a string of coral, and a cross of gold. Beneath, a crimson petticoat, not silk, but of the fine stuff of the country, was just short enough to shew the prettiest foot in the world. Well ! I had often been in love at first sight, but now I prepared for it in earnest. Jacques was at her side, and shewed her all rustic attentions. He cut her loaf for her, culled her eggs for her, and pressed her to eat. I thought Jacques looked particularly ugly. Yet she did not seem to encourage him, and said little in return for a thousand country compliments.

“ You may suppose I was much questioned by my good humoured hosts, but not by her. She did not utter a word. But I observed she

was very attentive to all I said, and I translated that into a great deal. We talked of England. ‘*Mam’selle entend l’Anglois,*’ said Jacqueline, ‘*Est il possible?*’ said I. ‘I hate *l’Anglois,*’ said Jacques. ‘*C’est une vilaine - langue—Vous êtes malhonnête,*’ said his mother.

“ ‘*Toujours tort,*’ cried Jacques, looking sulky, and was silent for the rest of the breakfast.

“I could enlarge much on all this, but will not detain you. It is sufficient, as you may suppose, that upon Jacqueline’s information, I addressed myself in English to Zerlina, who answered me with some shyness, but very prettily, and only kindled my interest more and more to know who she was, and how she came to be domesticated with beings, evidently so much her inferiors. Besides, I remembered the expression of Jacqueline the evening before, ‘*Outre ses malheurs.*’ No! there was no stirring till I had discovered what they were.

“Discover them I did, and strange they proved; strange enough even for me. You will perhaps scarce believe me when I tell you the native country of Zerlina was Poland: the seat of her misfortunes as well as those of so many others at that cruel time. I have told you I was no

politician, and I never thought much about the rascally partition just then going on, though dinned daily in my ears by my patron Sir John, from whom I had escaped. But I now thought of nothing else.

“Zerlina was the daughter and sister of the Staroste Zerlinsky. Her mother was English, and a Mordaunt; hence her pretty English tongue. And as Miss Mordaunt had travelled much in Italy for her health, hence Zerlina’s Italian name. The family settled some time at Bagnieres, the Bath of the Pyrenees, to which people of all nations flocked; and here the match took place between Miss Mordaunt and the Staroste Zerlinski, and here Zerlina was born. Afterwards they went to Poland with a Pyrenean nurse, of whom hereafter.

“All was happy for some years; till those miseries arose, which afford no play to the imagination but such as I am by no means fond of.

“Zerlina’s mother was dead, and her father had nobly opposed the three crowned birds of prey who were devouring his fine country. But he perished in unequal battle against the Russians, who claimed him, his son, and Zerlina, too, as subjects, by a law of their own making. The

son was seized in his own house, and hurried to head-quarters to be tried for treason, though he had not yet been in arms, and had never heard of any sovereign but Poniatowski. Think of my glory, when I tell you his life was saved, though his liberty could not be preserved, by the energy of the gentle girl I have just described to you !”

Here the whole company became elevated with pleasure, as well as curiosity, and Mr. Rivers, greatly animated, went on.

“ As soon as she heard of his capture, and of what he was accused, ignorant as she was of the world, and even of Poland, where she had never stirred from her father’s house; unaccustomed even to the sight of men, (in truth but then barely eighteen) she conceived the great, the romantic design, God bless her for it,” said Rivers, with an emotion caught by all his guests) “ of appearing before the military tribunal that was to try him, with the hope, to save his life.”

The company were breathless.

“ And nobly she performed it,” continued Rivers, “ though she had two hundred miles to travel; through roads full of savages, and of which she was wholly ignorant. With no male friend to

protect her—nothing but a guide—she traversed her smoaking country to the Russian headquarters, and presenting herself to the general, besought him to hear her.

“ ‘I have no hope,’ said the tremulous girl, in tears, ‘that begging a brother’s life, as a favour, will do ; but if a trial is allowed, and proofs that he has never been in arms, I have brought them with me to throw at your feet.’ ”

“ The astonished old Scythian, to whom she addressed herself, had some heart left. He looked at her, then at her papers, and then at her again; and for the first time in his life, hesitated about a military execution. But the proofs were clear, and Zerlina touching: and somehow or another he felt that Zerlinsky was innocent—so he sent him to Siberia.* ”

“ As for Zerlina, after being allowed to embrace her brother, the same good Providence which had protected her to head-quarters, protected her back again. But she found the family fortune confiscated, her house in ruins, and had no where to lay her head but in the cottage of her nurse, then a widow, about thirty miles

* For the honour of woman let it be known, that this is a story of real life.

off. Here she remained in safety for three months, and passed for, and dressed like her nurse's daughter. But in vain, for the province in which she now resided, had been seized by Prussia, and the good Frederick, finding a number of his beloved Prussians without wives, thought it but right to provide them with that necessary comfort. He had just issued an order therefore, for every family in which there was a marriageable girl, to send her with a portion of household stuff, to the husbands whom he had selected for them, on the other side of the Oder. The general who had the execution of this order, had already pitched upon Zerlina.

“There was nothing left for her but to fly, and no place to fly to but England or the Pyrenees, the old nurse's native country. ”

“England was too far off, and Zerlina knew not her relations; so they flew, that is, they came in a waggon to Bagnieres, where the good nurse hoped to find her family. She found only an uncle, but he was grown old, and had retired to die in the hamlet where I met Zerlina.

'Twas a beautiful hamlet, as I have told you; and Zerlina, who courted privacy, entreated her nurse to settle there. She had saved some ducats from the wreck of her fortune, and all

her mother's jewels: and luckily the Poles are very fond of jewels. Her nurse, too, had a little hoard. So they established themselves humbly but comfortably at St. Elmo. Alas! in twelve months Zerlina lost this faithful old friend, and was glad to be received as a boarder by the respectable old lady in whose cottage I found her."

Here Mr. Rivers stopped, as if doubtful whether he had not told enough, but no one seeming to relax in his disposition to listen, he went on.

"In this sequestered spot she endeavoured to forget herself. She liked the females, and all shewed her attention. Too much attention, for Jacques—but hang Jacques—he did not succeed and was so unhappy, poor fellow, that one morning he left us, with his Montero cap on his head, a long gun on his shoulder, and a leathern bottle and wallet at his back. He said he would just go and fetch us an iserre. I shall never forget his blue stockings and red garters, tied under the knee. A fine figure, Sir, for a picture; and I wish I had taken him. But I never saw him afterwards. He said he would only climb the mountains; but he climbed

into Savoy, and never came back while I was in the village."

Here Mr. Rivers concluded, saying, "My tale is done, for as you may suppose, the admiration I had conceived for the beauty of Zerlina, did not diminish by learning her history and character. Such was the esteem kindled by these, that had she been plain, I believe I should have been equally won. As it was—

‘ I loved her for the dangers she had past,
And she loved me that I did pity them.’

In short, I married her. Marriage usually puts an end to imagination. But it was not so with mine. What I have been telling you happened five or six years ago, and I am now about thirty; but, thank Heaven, imagination has not yet failed me. To be sure, I suppose Zerlina is not so much of a nymph as she used to be. But I cannot find it out; and the knowledge of her virtue, and the recollection of the romance which brought us together, not only point every charm, but are always new to our hearts. I have a boy who already repeats verses; and a girl who is an angel. We still dance in an orchard, and I still play the flute."

It was late night when the friends returned to their lodgings from Rivers' supper, and Rivers' story. They were both much impressed by it, and they agreed that what Wentworth in his speculation had despaired to meet with—a man full of interests unconnected with the business of life—was here found. They agreed, indeed, that most who were engaged in that business would laugh at Rivers as a madman, or at best as a very great fool. But to Wentworth, in his then frame of mind, the man of imagination seemed a person of a higher world. “For though,” said Wentworth, “he talked a great deal of what many of us would, and not unjustly, call nonsense, yet never man was seemingly more qualified to laugh in his turn at our struggles, or tell a minister of state, I want nothing of you.”

“He would at farthest,” observed De Vere, “tell the minister to stand out of his sunshine, if he were in it. He beats Bolingbroke all to nothing with his philosophy and his inscriptions.”

“He is certainly an enviable person,” proceeded Wentworth; “and whether we may agree with him or not in the road he has taken to happiness, I never saw more sincerity in the

enjoyment of it. He puts us matter-of-fact people to the blush. In imagining all, he possesses all."

"He possesses the woman he loves," remarked De Vere.

A silence of some minutes ensued, each revolving the tale they had heard according to his different notions, till they separated for the night, to think of it alone.

They passed a week or two in this country of romance, the tutelary deities of which seemed the enthusiastic Rivers and his touching little wife—both of whom became objects of their close observation. In truth, the friends expected to detect something like vacuity in their enjoyments. But no. The imagination of Rivers gilded every thing with sunshine. He was out of doors whenever the weather did not forbid, and when it did, employed himself in reading to his wife.

The friends were curious to observe the subjects he generally chose, which they concluded would be of the Ariosto school. To their surprise they found them to be history and memoirs, or those writers who have best painted the manners and follies of men. Expressing wonder at it, Rivers told them that it was this that made

his liberty so sweet; for if he did not know the world, either through himself or others, he might hanker after it. Hence, in graver moments, Plutarch and Horace were always his favourite authors.

De Vere particularly marked this, and said, if his were madness, there was at least method in it.

De Vere profited, by Rivers's acquaintance with the news of Poland, to extract from him both information and advice, as to the despairing prospect of that ill-fated country. But Rivers was far more disposed to talk of the *chasse de Ramier*, or wild pigeons, than of a hopeless cause which he could not remedy; and for this purpose he led them over the mountains to Bagnieres, to see what in fact was a curiosity, and, at that time of the year, proved no unpleasant expedition. In the *chasse de Ramier*, peasants skilled in the art, (some of them coming a hundred miles for that purpose,) repaired to a high wood of cork trees, over which flocks of these pigeons (thousands in number) regularly passed about this time, in the manner of birds of passage. The wood was lined with nets, extending perhaps three or four hundred yards. In advance, were raised

masts, fifty or sixty feet high, on the top of which sat a watchman, provided with machines of light wood, in the shape of a hawk with spread wings. On the approach of the birds to a proper point, these were launched in the air with great force, and the game, stooping to avoid the supposed destruction, flew into real, by endeavouring to pass through the wood, where they were caught in the nets.

The *chasse* was periodical, and lasted some days. It always occasioned a sort of holiday when it occurred; hundreds of idlers, cheerful and uncheerful, flocking from the neighbouring places, (but especially Bagnieres) to behold the sport. These made a sort of fair, or rather encampment, chiefly composed of huts, which were run up in an hour or two, from boughs and branches. Here there was a universal pic-nic during the day, and many remained all night with no other bed than dry leaves. The night, however, was seldom entirely devoted to sleep: the watchers, tempted by that fine climate, beguiled the time by roaming about in companies to the sound of the guitar and tambour basque; which produced in the stillness, and especially at a distance, a delightful effect.

All this was so new, and at the same time so

pleasing both to Wentworth and De Vere, that, could the former have forgotten he had been a minister, and might be so again, and the latter not only that he had been and was still a lover, but that he meditated a more distant flight from her he loved, both would have been content to have followed Rivers's standard for a much longer time than they did.

As it was, the diversion of gloomy remembrances was much assisted, and the health of Wentworth rapidly restored, by such a way of life.

CHAPTER XIX.

REACTION.

Time hath, my lord, a wallet on his back
 Wherein he puts alms for oblivion.
 A great-sized monster of ingratitude.
 Those scraps are good deeds past ; which are devoured
 As fast as they are made, forgot as soon as done.

SHAKESPEARE.

TORRENTS and fells are delightful things to look at in fine weather ; but one cannot always have fine weather. It is charming also to paint ; but one cannot always be painting. The contemplation of man, indeed, under his various appearances, is delightful to the moral observer ; and a new or primitive people is a noble field of interest, until it is got by heart. Hence the charm of pastoral life to a man accustomed to cities ; and the sweets of repose, to one jaded by the contests of passion. To youth also, which has all time before it, and all the world to choose in, and which, therefore, can play the prodigal with both time and the world, pleasure

seems interminable, because ever seen through the glass of hope. O ! its careless uncertainty is delicious ! It gilds all prospects, and gives body to wishes ; nor can the most successful certainty of after times, not even if it make a prime minister of a clerk, or a commander-in-chief of a private soldier, ever equal, in real happiness, that of the simple stripling who hopes all, and believes what he hopes.

“ Where do you live ? ” said I once to an erect Irish boy of fifteen. “ Wherever there are the best potatoes,” was the answer. “ And where sleep ? ” “ Wherever there is the best hay.” Such beings may roam unheeded and unheeding through pathless wilds, nor sleep the less sound because they know not where they are.

Not so with the veterans of the world, particularly if they have sacrificed to any great passion, and only fled from it as a relief, when its mischiefs pressed too sorely upon them ; as little with those high and honourable spirits, who are born to serve mankind by directing, and whose province it is, therefore, to live in the midst of them.

It is certain, the journey of our travellers to the Pyrenees, the sights they saw, and the life

they led there, had opened a source of pleasure and of thought to them both, to which they gave themselves up at first with devotion. But somehow or another, this altered by degrees; and though Wentworth continued to admire the energies of Rivers, in the pursuit of his own peculiar happiness, his admiration began to be mixed with wonder that they did not wear out. De Vere too began to be ashamed, at having suffered that design which so tempted his free spirit when he left England, in favour of the Polish cause, to languish as it had done, even after his first object, that of soothing and restoring Wentworth, had been accomplished. To be sure, both Rivers, and Wentworth himself, had much shaken him from a resolution which, from the constant advices received from the north, appeared now to be Quixotish. But his inclination still bent that way, and his unwillingness to return to England remained undiminished.

In this state of abated enjoyment, on the one part, and irresolution on the other, the month of October approaching, and Parliament definitively summoned for the dispatch of business, both the gentlemen felt much excited by a letter, with the London post-mark, and signed "Her-

bert," on the outside. It was directed to Wentworth, who read it with avidity; and it contained many passages too applicable to our subject, not to be recorded.

"What you tell me," said the letter, "of the restoration of your health, and, in part, of your mind, delights me. Your way of life too, and the scenes you describe, would almost make my old age romantic, and long to join you. But I fear I have too long preferred Homer and Thucydides, to Virgil and Ariosto; and the historical plays of Shakspeare, to Oberon and Titania, to hazard what I know would be a disappointment. The regions of fancy, indeed, are still charming; but fancy is often as charming in the closet, as in the supposed realities of what she makes us dream. Shall I own to you, that your visit (if I may so call it) to Bolingbroke was far more interesting than your Pyrenees. All you find there, proves that the 'real study of mankind is man.' Mr. Rivers is to be sure a wonderful creature; but he is at least a nondescript, and probably unique. Neither you nor De Vere are, however, like him, nor made to doze away life in useless imagination. You say he is happy; but his happiness is not, and cannot be, either yours or

your friend's. He cannot direct the world, however he may the shepherds of the Pyrenees. I question if he could even direct the latter; for who does not know that shepherds once were conquerors and kings, and had energies which cannot be his? Upon both of you the world has claims. Your duty is concerned. And in regard to my friend De Vere, however we must respect those dispositions in favour of unhappy Poland, which animated him on leaving England, I trust I need not set forth to his good sense, the nullity, I had almost said the ridicule of supposing that his single arm (and that not an experienced one), can do any good to a cause now universally despaired of. But were this not so, and with even a mere view to your own reputations, no talents in this country can sleep, and yet preserve command. The sword, rusty in its scabbard, is no longer a sword. The brightest diamond withdrawn from sight, is no longer dazzling. In its absence inferior stones begin to shine. Remember Achilles, during whose cessation Ajax filled the eyes of the Grecian camp.

“ Perhaps I should not be thus urgent, or thus free, but for what I see passing here. Lord Oldcastle triumphs; of Lord Mowbray's

catastrophe, you are, no doubt, informed; and Lord Cleveland says you are not to be feared. Yet the discontents are outrageous, and your absence during so much of the last session, has brought forward others, whom the ministers affect to estimate as at least your equal. It is said they court them, and even coalitions are talked of; and when your name is mentioned, the lip is pursed up, and it is asked, in a tone I venture not to describe, ‘What is he doing in the Pyrenees?’ Depend upon it, secession, or even withdrawing from sight, never did good; and in times not pregnant with great events, the maxim of ‘nobody is missed,’ is but too well founded. But your teacher and mine has put all this in a light so infinitely more forcible than I can, that I must conclude with rather a large quotation :

‘Perseverance, dear my lord,
Keeps honour bright: to have *done*, is to hang
Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail
In monumental mockery.’

“ Again,

‘Time is like a fashionable host,
That slightly shakes his parting guest by the hand,
And with his hands outstretch’d as he would fly,
Grasps in the comer: welcome ever smiles,
And farewell goes out sighing.’

“ Adieu ! do not let the wisdom of Ulysses be thrown away upon you.”

In the present temper of Wentworth, this letter had almost the effect of a match laid to a train. He felt as strong and active in health as ever ; and, during the rest of the day, few questions were asked but what concerned the distance and state of the roads to Paris. Both gentlemen were puzzled by the passage which alluded to Lord Mowbray’s catastrophe ; and De Vere, in particular, was filled with interest, and wished to return. But he trembled when he remembered the last winter, and thought prospectively of the next.

“ It is not,” said he to Wentworth, “ that I am not alive to the President’s letter, or that I am the Quixote he would so justly suppose me, could I fancy myself in my single person, born to restore liberty, where it has been abandoned by nations. If Europe allow this nefarious partition, individuals may blush for it, but can do no more. I am also moved to know what has been the fate of my uncle, to which Dr. Herbert alludes. But I have too little happiness, too

* Evidently alluding to the fine speech of Ulysses in *Troilus and Cressida*.

little prospect at home, to make me scan with much nicety, the chances of ultimate success to any cause I may embrace abroad. Your way is pointed out; mine is still to seek."

"And is not *my* way, *your* way?" said Wentworth, kindly.

"It would be, and willingly," replied De Vere, "should I ever recover my power of fighting by your side in parliament."

"You mean your influence at Wellsbury," said Wentworth; "but meantime, is there any thing to prevent your entering the lists through the means of others—with our powerful parliamentary connections?"

"Excuse me," cried De Vere, interrupting him. "If you are kind enough to mean that I may be returned through some great friend of your's, whose order I must therefore follow, and whose opinions I must therefore consult; in short, through whose reflected grace alone I can be deemed even worthy of notice,—such a seat I will never hold."

"Let us explain to one another," said Wentworth, mildly. "That you are made to follow in a train like Clayton, and add one more to the cyphers of the house, no one who knows you will suppose, nor will you believe that such was

my meaning. But however beautiful the contrary may be in theory, experience proves that to act through and with party, can alone confer the power of being useful. And if so, it is one thing to be brought into parliament because we are of a certain party, and a very different one to enlist in a party because we are brought into parliament."

"That is perfectly true," said De Vere; "but that it is possible to be turned out by him who brings me in, would paralyze me. No! in whatever I may engage, I must have the free use of my arms, nor ever fear the loss of them. I must be thoroughly *mei juris*, before I could feel that freedom of action, that dignity of independence, which could alone render me capable of serving a party, could I belong to one. With this, a simple vote, even unaccompanied by any other personal consequence than integrity, might do you service—without this, the best abilities, nay, eloquence itself, is thrown away."

"Yet eloquence is sometimes commanding, always dazzling," said Wentworth, warming towards a gift with which he was himself so eminently endowed.

"I do not undervalue it," returned De Vere; "but after all that has been said of the insince-

city of statesmen, and the venality of senates, I am not such a stranger to the character of my countrymen, as not to have seen that for eloquence to have weight it must be set off by honesty, and that an eloquent rogue is but an eloquent rogue after all."

Wentworth smiled, but De Vere went on: "Yes, with but little experience, I have yet made out that *character* is, upon the whole, what bears the English statesman through; at least, that character without rhetoric will beat rhetoric without character."

"I at least honour you for this," said Wentworth; "yet am I far from thinking that the independent votes which really make the statesman proud, are not to be found among those who follow a particular connection, or are only to be found where perhaps you only look for them—among the members for counties. As we are in the Pyrenees, and not in the atmosphere of Westminster, to you I may say it, that there is not only as much party spirit, but as much *prostration* among the greatest country gentlemen as the closest borough holders. I question if the country gentleman be not the greater slave of the two. The only difference is in the masters. For the county member

crouches as much to his elector, yields his opinion, votes against his conscience as often, if not oftener than the little burgess who follows the patron of his choice : only in the one case, the independent, as he is called, has a thousand lords ; in the other, but one. In proof of this, look at the county member, shaking for his seat towards the end of a parliament, and ask what is become of the pride and self-consequence that marked the beginning of it ?”

“ I fear this is but too true,” observed De Vere, “ but it interferes not with what I have said on the value of character.”

“ On the contrary,” replied Wentworth, “ it confirms it ; and I so entirely agree with you, that ambitious as I am supposed to be, the summit of my ambition is to rule through that character. This only can gratify the best pride of a statesman, and for this, if I mistake not, the state is preparing itself. There may yet be years of impurity to throw off, and of corruptions to cure ; there may even be a great crisis, and things may be worse before they are better. The Clevelands and even the Claytons may gain the upper-hand ; but depend upon it, the time will come, nay, perhaps is not far off, when a first minister may find that his character will be as

firm a support as his ability ; when sincerity of heart and openness of manner may do as much for a Chancellor of the Exchequer, as his figures ; and when a Secretary of State who promotes English interests, without being too tenderly alive to every brawl of the Continent, will govern with more facility than all the Machiavels we have ever heard of."

De Vere pressed his friend heartily by the hand at this speech, and pleased himself with the hope that it might be prophetic.

" I feel it here," cried Wentworth, putting his hand to his breast, " I see it in vision, though I may not live to know it in reality. The spread of knowledge and wealth must have its natural effect ; the king will realize Temple's picture of the man of his people : and ministers, as you often wish, will govern for the people, not for themselves."

Nothing could be more consonant to all the best hopes of De Vere ; and his patriotism was delighted to find that a man, though a minister, might be patriotic ; nor was the impression weakened, when Wentworth proceeded to say, that if ever he returned to power, it would be his pride to rally round him the best spirits of the country, without regard to the old arts

of governing. "They must be young," said he, "and new to things, and not hackneyed in the trammels which Lord Oldcastle knows are ruining him, and yet has not the firmness to break through."

Then seeing De Vere's eyes sparkling with the pleasure which all this kindled, he very frankly asked if he meant still to abandon him, and pursue an unknown path on the Continent alone?

De Vere allowed that he was much embarrassed; for he felt, he said, the cowardice of leaving his friend with such noble objects to struggle for alone, and then perhaps only return to share in his success.

"I shall envy even the satellites I have mentioned," added he, "who may have hovered round you, and witnessed if not partaken of your glory. But what efforts can be those of a man without arms, and against whom the tide of prejudice seems to have set among all his old companions?"

He was prevented from going on, by the delivery of a packet which had been delayed, and which immediately absorbed him. It was from his mother, who after treating the account of the Pyrenees very differently from Herbert,

concluded by saying, "I am, thank Heaven, well; but I am sorry to say your uncle breaks visibly to all who know him. He bears his mortification worse than I could have hoped; is full of fears for himself; and Constance has shut out the world during the whole summer, to shut herself up with him at Castle Mowbray. Her confinement has hurt her; exercise has been prescribed, and she often rides Beauty, which I have sent her at her own desire."

De Vere trembled with curiosity and interest when he came to these lines, which he read twice before he could proceed.

Lady Eleanor, adverting to one of the causes that took him abroad, as totally despaired of, in the minds of the most romantic, concluded thus: "Think not, my dear son, that this proceeds from a womanish fear, or a mother's anxiety. I tell you only the universal opinion in England. I speak not of those little spirits who think all ardour ridiculous which they do not, or cannot partake, but of all the best informed and least selfish, with whom I have communication. Believing this opinion to be the true one, I fear not any sinister motive within myself, nor being thought to act like an

unworthy mother, if I tell you that Talbois languishes for its master, as I for my son."

This noble and affecting conclusion to a letter which was otherwise full of the deepest interest, revolutionized De Vere. His mother stood all before him, and the mere name of Constance on catching his eye, called the blood into his cheeks. It has been said, "What is there in a name?" What is there not? Is it not extraordinary, that a few black marks on white paper, without coming in contact with any part of our bodies, shall be able thus to affect us? And can any man really think that the soul that can be thus affected, is a material machine?

De Vere was almost as decidedly, certainly as quickly changed by this letter, as Wentworth was by his. Poland was effectually banished, and Constance nursing her sick father, and shut out from the world during a whole summer, was the only object for which he had any vision, during his entire journey with Wentworth from Bagnieres to Dover.

CHAPTER XX.

THE EMBARRASMENTS OF HIGH LIFE.

By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is weary of this great world.

You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are; and yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much as they that starve with nothing.

SHAKESPEARE.

So thought the Lady Constance, without (like Portia) consulting her waiting-maid; and she thought so, as we have seen, before the first winter of her introduction in the world was over.

We left her after endeavouring, in vain, to soothe her father in his distress, under phantoms which his imagination had conjured up, but which were also dreaded by Lords Oldcastle and Cleveland; so all-devouring is the suspicion of the ambitious. In earlier days, Godolphin took the alarm, and prophesied ruin, at the sight of Harley's coach coming from Kensington. No

wonder, then, that these watchful persons were tremulously alive when they were told by Clayton (whom they had sent there for the purpose), that Lord B——— had twice supped with the royal party at Windsor.

The consternation did not end here; for a great officer of the Crown, whose attachment to the ministry had begun to be equivocal, and who was, therefore, still more strictly observed, had actually brought into the very council-chamber the hat of one of the royal brothers, instead of his own, by which a secret interview at the palace had been detected; and what was worse, the officer, under so trimming a minister as Lord Oldeastle, was thought too powerful to be displaced. Lord Cleveland, who urged instant punishment, but without success, was so alarmed at this cowardice, that he sounded a *sauve qui peut*; observing, however, drily, that his character of a king's friend made it indifferent to him who was in, who out. This did not diminish the misery of Lord Mowbray. In short, the whole afforded an useful lesson to an observer, upon the nothingness of ambition, when so little understood, or rather so abjectly pursued, as to fix its views on place as an *end*, not as a *mean* of glory.

Youthful and inexperienced as she was, to no one was this more obvious than to Constance ; and, we may add, to no one did it bring more chagrin. Though composed of those elements which inclined her to filial reverence, even as a necessary part of her happiness, she could not shut her eyes to what (to say the very best of it) appeared the weakness of her father ; and when he continued to complain of the world, and talked of evils which to her seemed so beneath the good and great, we will not say how shocked she was in her best feelings. Uneasy before, from she knew not what disappointments, this became downright distress. Ambition, as she saw it pursued, began to be hateful to her, and no object among all the brilliant prospects of her life seemed so desirable, as to separate her father, if she could, from the alliance he had made with men on whom she willingly laid the blame of all the self-torment which he evidently suffered.

Poor, simple Constance ! how wouldest thou have been laughed at in the world, if this little endeavour of thy natural heart had been known among the thousand flatterers that thronged thy brilliant drawing-rooms !—insects that enjoyed the dazzle of the minute, and

thought all grandeur consisted in high-sounding titles or power, no matter how acquired, or at what price pursued.

But Constance was not one of these. Her own disposition, together with Lady Clanellan's lessons, and her aunt Lady Eleanor's history, had made her peculiarly alive to passing scenes; and the futility of most of them (any more than the extreme luxury in which she was immersed), to produce the only end of our being—*happiness*. The death of Beaufort had been a shock to her which was even yet not worn out; nor could she help wondering at many of her young companions, who, after talking of it with emotion on one day, forgot it the next, and now only seemed to remember it as an event in history. This and the loss (though temporary) to society of such a man as Wentworth; and, may we not add, the separation of Mortimer from his friends, made her serious and uneasy, though decked with all the trappings of public show; and the heiress of Mowbray gave many a sigh under the jewels which nightly sparkled on her bosom.

If she turned from ambition to other interests, the prospect was still less exhilarating. She was still surrounded by suitors, many of whom might

be lovers, and some of them worthy. But from most she turned, as actuated, if not by mean, at best by mixed motives; and even among those whose frame of mind she respected, she found not one who possessed that grace in disclosing it, that engaging compound of look, manner, and speech; in short, that nameless something, which interests we know not how, charms we know not why, and steals into our hearts before we are aware of it.

Constance might be difficult, and she had a right to be so; but it was not the difficulty of pride. On the contrary, she had a soul formed for the gentlest impressions; as she well proved to those of her own sex whom she loved. In regard to ours, except in so far as an habitual interest respecting De Vere was concerned, there was an absolute void, and that void was not filled up by the number or variety of her admirers. Some of them embarrassed her by the splendour of their proposals; some teased her by their perseverance, and others affronted her by their pride. The Duke of Bellamont had long left her, piqued that his attentions were repulsed. Lord Cleveland was piqued too, and meditated revenge, which excited the energetic, and distressed the softer parts of her character.

She saw but one opening for relief either for herself or her father—a flight from London to Castle Mowbray. And this, with all submission, she ventured to propose.

But these were not times to remove so far, and the tremulous lord of that castle felt himself far from safe within its walls. Another castle, was, he thought, the focus of intrigue, and if he must leave London, he imagined that the air of Windsor was quite as good as Staffordshire. He indeed consulted the minister as his chief, and Lord Cleveland as his friend, upon the propriety of remaining all the summer within the royal atmosphere; and they both, very heartily, and, we believe, sincerely, told him, they saw no necessity for it. But it was an ambiguous mode of expression; and the more active penetration of Mr. Clayton, had made his patron miserable by observing, that if the report was true, that a new arrangement was in contemplation, nothing could be more convenient for such views, than his absenting himself at such a time. Lord Mowbray, more and more assailed by fear, became more and more unhappy, nor did the abandonment of his own lordly castle, and the temporary occupation

of an ephemeral villa at Old Windsor, at all diminish his anxiety.

In truth, Clayton was no more than right, though he knew not the extent to which he was so. The trimming politics of Lord Oldcastle, had met the same fate with most half measures. Demands of a participation of power rose upon him in proportion to his timidity; and he had become reduced to the question whether he should himself retire, or oblige some, at least, of his subordinate colleagues to give way to more active spirits.

Under this aspect of affairs, Lord Mowbray became ill; and Constance, who never stirred from his couch, had the misfortune to find all her little topics of consolation thrown away, because he could not understand them. On the other hand, Clayton was for ever in request, for ever passing to take account of the visitors at the royal residence, or sent on confidential messages to Downing Street; in the entangled replies to which latter, less tact than his own could discover, it was any thing but the intention to return an intelligible answer. The confident himself, indeed, became alarmed, and did not spare his patron on that account. He had endeavoured to engage Lord Eustace on

the former confidential footing, but to his surprise and dismay, found him cool, and uncommunicative. With the bold, overbearing (and so far open) spirit of Lord Cleveland, he was more successful.

“One and one only thing can save Lord Mowbray,” said Cleveland, “and that through my interposition. The consummation of the alliance I have long sought, and which it is an affront beyond bearing to have so long delayed.”

The alarmed confident sought explanation, but was refused; and, what was worse, felt too much in the power of this haughty nobleman not to submit, as a vassal submits to his liege lord. Such is the slavery of the man who loses his freedom when he has lost his honesty.

Both Lord Mowbray and Clayton endeavoured to assume the dignity of persons ill-treated; both to veil their fears in resentment; but neither were fitted for it. A little spark of sentiment, indeed, excited the feeling of Clayton for his patron, when he thought of the proud station on which he might retire, and whence (had he only dignity of character) he might hurl defiance on his enemies. But when he turned to himself, none of these consolations were

to be found. To return to poverty and original insignificance, were his patron to drop—insignificance, too, made worse by having lost his early friends, was all the prospect which he had before him; and in this distress he thought there was nothing left either for himself or Lord Mowbray, but to renew the attempt to push on the alliance, still so devoutly pursued by the puissant Cleveland. The attempt was accordingly made, and in a manner to destroy the peace of Constance.

The unhappiness of her father amounted to desolation. He complained of the ingratitude of the world, the desertion of friends in his old age, the coldness of princes, and the hollowness of court friendships. One would have thought his lordship a Lord Derby, or a Duke of Ormond himself, except that those illustrious persons were above complaining.

Constance did all she could to give dignity to his sorrow, by fancying it well founded. But her consolations were not of a sort that suited the injured politician. She reminded him of his ancient descent and ample possessions, and the greater consideration which an English peer (experienced in affairs, and relying on no support but his own virtue) might enjoy, if he

pleased, beyond all, or nearly all the commonplace men of office who now filled the public eye, without commanding the public respect. She then drew a picture of the happiness which the holder of such a station might command, if he could only determine to enjoy the blessings that were his own, and not suppose there was that enchantment in the mere circumstance of office, which might be honourable or indifferent, or even disreputable, according to the condition by which it was held.

“ You wish me then to resign,” said Lord Mowbray, with a lip quivering between horror and contempt.

“ I wish my dear father,” replied Constance, “ to assert his place: to live to himself, and laugh at the insolence or jealousies of little minds.”

Alas! the mind to which this was addressed was not a great one.

“ Pretty talking,” said Lord Mowbray; “ to resign, and strip one’s-self of all consequence; to be left unnoticed by the minister among the common herd—a cypher without power—not even the means of providing for a menial dependant: Oh! Lady Constance, how little you know of the world!”

Then changing his tone to something like fondness, which delighted the affection of his single-hearted daughter, he told her, with many circumflections, (and hints rather than propositions,) that it was in her power not only to restore him to health, but to enable him to raise his head higher than ever at court, by only listening to Lord Cleveland's proposals.

Constance turned pale at this intimation, for it made her miserable, she said, to think how differently she and her father judged of this nobleman.

"Yet he has still the royal favour," said Lord Mowbray; "he heads the great party of the king's friends, and, by connection and influence, is the most powerful individual in the state."

"This may be all true," said Constance, with a sigh.

"Then what can be your objection?" asked the anxious earl. "To be sure he is somewhat older—"

"Oh! it is not that," said Constance.

"He may not be so handsome as many, but he has a noble air, and is more agreeable than most."

"It is not that," continued Constance, in more and more agitation.

“Then what is it?” cried her father; “he is devoted to you, and rich, and you would revel in the gratification of all your wishes.”

Constance was startled to think how different were the notions of her father and herself as to these very riches; and, in particular, how little it had been hitherto in their power to crown her felicity.

“You hesitate, dear Constance,” said her father. “May I not hope that your opposition has been more the result of an excusable coquetry, than aversion? If so, how proud shall I be of my daughter!—how quickly restored to health!”

Constance was more and more distressed: more embarrassed than ever how to reply; but under such a misapprehension her presence of mind returned at once. She saw the mischief of reserve, and the necessity for instant explanation. Yet her heart was softened by even the little appearance of softness towards her, which the self-flattery of the earl, as to her decision, had produced; and when he took her hand, and she beheld his pallid cheek and faded eye, she could have almost fancied it possible to think of Lord Cleveland without disgust, and at least wished to think of him with less aversion. It was.

therefore, with a tremulous voice, though not the less firm of purpose, that she said it was a most cruel misfortune not to be able to make her wishes bend to his.

“Oh!” said she, “were these wishes of any other kind, did they only regard my outward prosperity, fortune, power, rank in the world, how gladly would I sacrifice them all. But where my inward happiness is concerned; when every hour and every minute my self-approbation would be forfeited, in professing to love one whom I cannot even esteem!—honour, delicacy, and truth condemn; and my dear father, upon knowing, would be the first to oppose it.”

Alas! how little did she know the parent in whose liberality she thus confided!

The shock this perseverance in refusal gave him, had an alarming effect upon his whole frame. Already unnerved, and suffering misery from even the ignoble ambition which governed him, he was tortured by the fear of losing that darling power, to which, in effect, all that belonged to him should have rendered him superior.

Recovering at length a little, and but a little, from a most alarming fit of agitation, he de-

manded of her if she had the least wish to preserve his life?

Terrified and distressed, she falteringly asked, what could make him doubt it; adding, that to preserve it, she would willingly risk her own.

“And yet,” said he, “you refuse the sacrifice of what I must hold to be mere caprice; though the alternative is, as I feel it here (putting his hand to his heart), to fix me in my grave.”

Constance, overset by this cruel reproach, could not restrain her tears. She even hesitated, and the thought not merely of gratifying a parent, but of preserving his existence, operating upon her affectionate and gentle nature, she felt shaken, and was alive only to the sweetness of the rewards of filial duty. She looked with affection upon the face of her father, who, in his agitation, had rested his head on her bosom; forming a picture, which, prompted by other causes, would have been moving.

Under all his alarm, which was real enough, the earl felt the advantage he had gained; and thinking to complete it, he made a movement as if he would throw himself on his knees before his daughter, entreating, at the same time, that

she would gratify him in this last and only wish of his heart; her refusal of which would, he said, send him to his death.

Afflicted, astounded, and wholly overcome by what she saw, the unhappy Constance could scarcely prevent an act which filled her with horror and consternation. It stupified all her senses, and shocked all her notions of decency and right. A sort of hysterical scream escaped her, and she implored him not to destroy her by such condescensions.

“At least,” said she, falling on her own knees to him, “at least give me time! do not force a decision which, in making me miserable for ever, will not, cannot make you happy.”

So saying, she bent her face on his hand, which she kissed, and watered with warm tears, the effusions of a struggle which almost broke her heart.

We will not say that her suffering did not affect Lord Mowbray; on the contrary, as he had always loved her as much as his nature would permit, he felt moved by the agony of mind which this contest had produced, and, trusting to the influence which he felt he had over her, he thought he might safely relieve her for the present, by granting the time for deliberation

which she had implored. We do not know that he did this upon the principle, that "the woman who deliberates is lost," for Lord Mowbray had made few investigations concerning the female character. He knew, however, that he possessed his daughter's love. He knew the tenderness of her gentle nature ; and, above all, he knew her refined notions of filial duty. Trusting to them all conjoined, he hoped every thing from the proposed deliberation ; and, with caresses which, on any other occasion, would have filled the whole heart of Constance with happiness, he granted the delay proposed, and left her full of hope.

Possibly no woman ever suffered a greater struggle from the same cause, than she did at that moment. Her aversion to Lord Cleveland was not confined to personal dislike ; it was rooted in principle, and incorporated with all her best feelings. She saw at once personified in him, deceit, insolence, and the proud man's contumely : a heart corroded by love of self ; a mind that shocked her by its contempt of all that she held most dear, or thought most sacred.

Gentle, generous, and modest herself, could there be any thing of that affinity between them which is the charm of married life ? What was

worse, could there be any thing that would not be a source of poignant misery? Oh! how different from that divine communion of soul which her fancy had sometimes painted; that mutual inspiration which translates every look into understood language, and every spoken word into kindness and affection!

Her aversion, therefore, was that of refinement to coarseness; of goodness to evil; and but for one thing, death seemed preferable to such an alliance. But that one thing detained her long, before she could decide. Her sacrifice of herself might be the salvation of her father; the death of her own happiness the life of his.

In such a struggle, passed the most unhappy day which Constance had ever yet experienced. She passed it alone, for her father had left her to seek Lord Cleveland, whom he endeavoured to sound on the state of the intention concerning him. Not even the assurance of expected success with his daughter could extract this from the wily earl, who treated him now as a tool, now as an enemy—never as a man who had a right to his confidence. In truth he had been too often misled to give him the least credit; and except to practise upon his fears.

he scarcely noticed him, more than to say he waited the decision, before he could even tell whether he could serve him or not.

Meanwhile, the cause of all this unhappiness in the one nobleman, and of moodiness in the other, found something like support and certainty in that firmness of character which we have attempted to describe ; and after tossing in a sea of perplexity, her mind righted in the conclusion, that though she might put a force upon her inclinations, she had no right to sacrifice her principles. On this she built a final resolution to persist in refusing Lord Cleveland; but accompanied it by a determination to dedicate her whole life to the comforting and support of her parent, in every thing else. Fondly, however, she clung to the hope that he would himself be alive to what pride and his station demanded of him, and rise superior to attacks which he might and ought to despise.

The event was any thing but consonant to the expectations of this natural minded but unhappy lady. Her father, furious from disappointment, was still more so from the recollection how much he had humbled himself to his child, and humbled himself for nothing ; while the pure heart of that child was pierced through

and through, to think that so dreadful a sacrifice of decorum had been made in a cause so little worthy.

They separated in agony. He, to brood on the degradation he feared he had incurred;—she to lament, in silence, over this unhappy difference, which filled her heart with unextinguishable sorrow.

CHAPTER XXI.

FORCED RETIREMENT.

He hath forsook the court,
Broken his staff of office, and dispersed
The household of the king.

What was his reason ?
He was not so resolved when last we spake together.

SHAKESPEARE.

WHILE these minor parts were going forward in the drama of ambition, the more principal characters were hastening things to a crisis. Lord Cleveland, finding, spite of ten thousand manœuvres of Clayton's (who was indefatigable in messages between Old and New Windsor), that his cause with Constance was utterly desperate, resolved to keep no terms with her father, whose office was demanded. Full thirty years service, as Lord Mowbray called it—or sufferance, as Lord Oldcastle designated it—could not preserve him. It became

a fashion, indeed, to affect to abandon him. Jests were entertained at his expense, and the decorum of the court was almost disturbed by a very poignant one of Lord Cleveland's, which amused the ears of royalty itself. Some one, it seems, more compassionate than the rest, had ventured to deplore this usage of a man of such an illustrious family.

"Yes!" said Lord Cleveland, "'tis an illustrious family, no doubt; but, like potatoes, the best parts of them are under ground."

The shock was too great for the falling earl. After having in vain waited for some compromise, and been apprised of the determination to remove him, he sent in his resignation, to avoid a harder fate. The court air then became absolutely pestilential; and being really and seriously ill, he at length listened to the voice of Constance (who now, all herself, shewed nothing but alacrity and cheerfulness), and resolved to retire from Windsor to Castle Mowbray. He did so, lingeringly, but decisively, after waiting a fortnight for some consolatory message either from his royal master, or his former colleagues, which he seemed to expect, but which did not come.

It was now that he would have felt, if he

could, the consolations of such a creature as his daughter. Her face was ever beaming, ever blooming. Her watchfulness was incessant, but never could her father detect a cloud on her visage, or a tear in her eye. We are not sure that her father himself did not exhibit both. It is certain that this disappointed man was agitated beyond bearing, as he lost sight of the majestic towers, and primeval oaks of Windsor, in the enjoyment of which he had so often revelled, and, indeed, entirely passed the last two months. It was in vain that Constance talked to him, read to him, or told him her own feelings upon the inanity of the life she had been leading, and the hope of a better, in living more to themselves where they were going.

Lord Mowbray shook his head in silent sorrow. The first day's journey was therefore mournful; and, even on the second, the cheerfulness of Constance was exerted with little better success. The spirit of Lord Mowbray seemed irrecoverably sunk; and in losing, as he fancied, the royal favour (which, however, the royal penetration had been much too just ever to bestow upon him), he thought his sun was set never to rise again. He became fixed in melancholy; and when the great gates of his own noble

castle opened to receive him, they seemed to be the gates of a prison, which were afterwards to close upon him for ever.

And here may we not indulge a lucubration upon the different appearances and effects of retreat, according to the character of the person retreating, or the causes of his retirement. Many are the Lord Mowbrays of the world—weak in their career; weaker still, when forced to abandon it. But many also, who, from greater abilities, promised better things, have borne their reverses as ill. Cicero whined in banishment, and Olivarez sank under the terrors of a ghost. Bolingbroke, as we have seen, *wrote* beautifully of philosophy, but belied it in *practice*. Walpole talked of a contentment among his beeches, which nobody believed; and Swift growled on in perpetual exasperation, and only relieved himself by painting Yahoos.

In truth, none of these were prepared to retire from power, any more than to retire from life; and as the soul requires to be disciplined and subdued by high and sublime thoughts, in order to be resigned and ready even for its unavoidable fate; so, high determination of character, philosophical habits, and the true appreciation of things, can alone preserve it unhurt and un-

ruffled amidst the uncertainties of political events.

Strange, therefore, as it may appear, philosophy and the meditations of the closet, are as necessary a preparation for ambition, as a knowledge of courts or camps. Without this, difficult indeed will it be, after ill-regulated excitement, to court the valley, and fancy ourselves happy in the shade.

But there is a buoyancy of heart, which, supported by character, is incompressible. The mind retires upon its resources, and takes a fresh, perhaps a more vigorous spring, from being regenerated by leisure; and when it is so, can there be a more interesting spectacle than that of a high-charactered statesman, retired to fit himself for better things. All honourable interests may still be felt by him, and only what are sere and morbid need be pruned away. Thus every thing is sounder, every thing holier, and the soul proceeds in its advance to that state of goodness which must make its final retreat easy and happy.

We do not, by this, recommend to the enlightened, or even to the blind man of the world, "the hairy gown and mossy cell." What we do recommend is, the charm of philosophy, the

physic of self-examination, and the advantages of *unfettered* reflection upon the past. Then, and then only, may we feel purified (as our age requires), and then may be realized that holier vision of the poet,

“ Let thought unveil to my fix’d eye,
A scene of deep eternity :
Till life dissolving at the view,
I wake—and find my vision true.”

But Lord Mowbray was not one of these. As his soul had known but one bias, one energy (if energy it was), his spirit died when deprived of its only food. His castle looked as proud, his forests waved as nobly as ever, but not for him. Even his daughter’s cheerfulness, and her delightful soothing, were thrown away upon him ; and she had the misery of seeing him so far from being consoled by seclusion (though among possessions which princes might envy), that it even seemed to augment the source of his grief. “ Of what avail are all these things,” said he, “ when they could not preserve to me the protection of the crown which I have served so faithfully, against the *treason* of my enemies ?”

With this he sank deeper and deeper into melancholy; every part of his noble domain became indifferent to him; and the only moment of the day in which he seemed to live, was that of the arrival of the post. In short, but for letters from Clayton, whom he had left to watch over events, and which also soon became less and less frequent, no one seemed more completely forgotten.

The consequence was disastrous to his health, which had begun rapidly to decline; and he tore the poor heart of Constance to pieces, by giving her to understand, in return for the fondness with which she nursed him, that the whole of his suffering was owing to *her*!

Lady Eleanor had learned with grief the situation of her brother, and made every effort to be admitted a sharer with her niece in the task of watching over this sinking victim of mortification. But never could there be a worse consoler; for, of all in the world, his sister's presence seemed the most dreaded by Lord Mowbray.

"She is cold, and precise," said he, "and knows nothing of that world, from which, I suppose, she thinks she can wean me. Besides,

she is the mother of a man who. ———,” here he stopped, and buried the rest of what he had to say in silent thought.

He was equally averse to another offer of aid from Lady Clanellan.

“Her *lord*,” observed he, peevishly, “does not make the offer of coming. Why are these fine attentions only displayed by *women*? But no! the men know better than to throw away their notice upon one no longer in favour.”

In this state of things, as he had begun to be seriously alarmed for himself, he thought it advisable to send for the sagacious Wilmot; who, on his arrival, found things ill, and not likely to be better; and to the eager inquiries of Constance, he was guarded, and even reserved. But his interest was all excited for herself: for much did he admire her; and when he found that one so formed to be, what he had often heard her called, the rose of the world, had lost all pretension to roses, and was in fact drooping under the weight of filial attentions, he used all his authority, as well as all the persuasions of friendship, to induce her to alter her mode of life.

His injunction in regard to exercise was obeyed; for which purpose, having then no

horse that suited her, Constance wrote to her aunt for the loan of Beauty. This was instantly granted, and the park was often visited on this pretty favourite. But it was observed that walking was still more preferred; though her walks were seldom extended beyond the dairy house, where she spent most of the time that she was absent from her charge. Here she too often fell into reveries, which brought any thing but the relief hoped for by Wilmot. There were recollections attached to this spot, which the present subdued state of her mind was by no means calculated to repress; and these recollections got hold of her in a manner greatly to affect her peace. For it was here that she had so often, and so sweetly conversed with the only man whom she had admired and thoroughly esteemed; and as, with all her endowments, and all the gifts of fortune, no creature seemed at this moment so much in want of support, so, no one seemed so qualified to give it as this very person. The feeling we own was not diminished by the knowledge of all that he had been doing, seeing, and almost thinking, during the summer; all which she had learned from his own letters to his mother, which she had read with avidity, and remem-

bered now with something like melancholy. The contrast therefore which she could not help drawing, between her present state of mind in this favoured spot, and that enjoyed when it was first created, made her too often visit it with sadness, and quit it in tears.

The expectation of a visit from Clayton, now, for the first time in her life, gave pleasure to Lady Constance; but, strange to say, it was not gratified. Post after post went by without any intimation of the time when he might arrive, and often without any account of what was passing in the scene Lord Mowbray had quitted.

The astonishment at this change in the obsequious Clayton, was equally great, though not so grievously felt by Constance, as by her father.

“Never did I imagine,” said she, in her letters, both to her aunt and Lady Clanellan, “that I should be reduced to wish for a visit, or a letter from Mr. Clayton, as a relief. But how little do we know what is to become of us, or who is to rule under the passing hour!”

In her anxious solitude, these, and similar sentiments, got full possession of her reflecting though young mind. But the more she reflected, the more she became resigned to what-

ever might be intended for her by that unerring and mysterious power, who gave her life, and might make her happy or miserable for purposes, always just, but always inscrutable.

The awfulness of these considerations, however, did not overpower, but rather improved her fortitude, by exercising her faith in the goodness of Him, on whom she thus relied; and in complete and pure submission, she found the relief which real piety always administers. Hence, in the very midst of her anxiety about her father, she at least felt restored to the exercise of her mind, and the free course of her heart.

The freshness and dusk of the evening was generally consecrated to these musings, which grew to be her favourite pleasure in her present mode of life. What a contrast to the unthinking and overwhelming dissipation in which she had lately lived!

And thus the dazzling heiress, who had moved no where but in a crowd, and reigned in all eyes, and almost all hearts, the queen of fashion and splendour in London, became, in the loneliness of a deserted mansion, a more self-sustained, because a more self-approving being, than when she was the arbitress

“Of midnight revels, and the public show.”

But though restored to the enjoyment of her mind, and so far happier, this excellent young person was any thing but easy. She was distressed at seeing her father, not only, as she thought, sinking, but sinking from causes which brought not along with them the consolations of respect. Over this, therefore, she drew a veil, as close as her understanding would permit; and she listened eagerly to any surmises that could flatter her with the hope that the fate of Lord Mowbray was commiserated in the world. To this point, indeed, her information did not reach; but the letters of Lady Clannellan began to look as if there was an opinion that he had been ill-treated, and even betrayed by those he had most trusted, especially by Lord Cleveland, and his now proclaimed friend and confident, Mr. Clayton.

This information accounted for the change of conduct and protracted absence of the latter.

The immediate moment of the disgrace of Lord Mowbray had been one of agony to Mr. Clayton. The coldness of Lord Oldcastle, during the interviews he had with him, as a go-between, had killed all his hope, and filled him with terror. His place under Lord Mowbray,

of course fell. That given by Lord Oldcastle would, he supposed, follow; and his seat in parliament only became miserably embarrassing from not knowing how to vote. Should he still side with the government, he must sink under the meanness of his conduct to his patron; if with Lord Mowbray, and Lord Mowbray in opposition, he was infallibly proscribed by the government.

There was but one plan to extricate himself from this dilemma, which was, to persuade Lord Mowbray, if possible, still to give his support to the ministers, or at least not to join the opposition; and the hope of success in this was adroitly managed with Lords Cleveland and Oldcastle, so as to suspend, at least, the determination to expel him from his sinecure.

Nor was the task he had undertaken altogether so difficult. He talked of the dignity of not going into opposition out of resentment; of the high character for disinterestedness which Lord Mowbray might now achieve; as well as the possibility that such conduct might, sooner or later, bring him back to office. This latter topic was certainly cogent; and his patron thought, with him, that it was but wise not to

close the door for ever upon his return. In fact, Lord Mowbray remained neutral, and Mr. Clayton preserved his place.

But greater things were still in store for him. Lord Cleveland, one of whose most kindling objects was an extension of parliamentary influence, thought this an excellent opportunity to mature his designs upon the seat at Wellsbury ; and as Lord Mowbray, by the help of Clayton, had ravished it from De Vere, so Lord Cleveland, through the same Clayton, might ravish it from Lord Mowbray. As there was no difficulty from the sitting member, a treaty was therefore the instant consequence, by which all Mr. Clayton's influence and services were transferred to Lord Cleveland, and protection promised in return. This not only saved him from all fear of final dismissal, but gave new life and vigour to his prospects ; for Lord Cleveland, when with the minister, enlarged upon the advantage of possessing such an instrument of preserving Lord Mowbray's support, as a reason for fresh favour to Clayton.

Lord Oldcastle, who, we have said, was a keen observer, accepted the treason, but abused the traitor. Lord Cleveland, in reply, said, he must take men as he found them ; and with

this convenient mode of reconciling things, favour was promised. As Lord Mowbray made no secret of his wrongs, or of his resentment, men wondered at this. But they only wondered; and the machine went on.

It was at this crisis Wentworth and De Vere, after rapidly traversing France, landed at Dover.

CHAPTER XXII.

DISAPPOINTED AMBITION.

His grief grew puissant, and the strings of life
Began to crack.

SHAKESPEARE.

How few have ever left their country or their home for only three months, and returned to find them unchanged ! The course of events—fortune, reputation, health, the affections, ancient alliances—all are acted upon by time. Let those be happy and proportionably thankful, who, even after so short an absence, find all as it should be.

We may suppose how eager the travellers were in their inquiries after events at home, the moment they arrived at any source of intelligence. At Paris, the only thing they learned from the ambassador was, that Lord Mowbray had resigned, but still gave his support to go-

vernment. At Dover they were informed by the newspapers that he was dying. At Rochester they found that Lord Oldcastle was in distress; at Dartford, that he was firm as a rock. In London, Lord Cleveland had accepted a great dignity in the Household; and, in the Gazette, Mr. Clayton was actually appointed to a considerable place under him.

How changed was the great city from what it had appeared on that soft and silent morning when the travellers quitted it. The interminable succession of passengers; the quick step of business; the cries; the roll of carriages, or doors besieged by battering footmen; the look of care exhibited by those who had been long in town, or of eagerness and curiosity by those just arrived, to attend the opening of Parliament: all this formed a marked contrast to the comparatively magnificent solitudes, and cheerful freedom of Nature, in which they had lately lived. It was equally so to the dead silence of those very streets which they had traversed at the dawn of day, some three months before.

Their feelings were as changed as the scene. A sensation of doubt, uncertainty, and disappointment, as to their immediate lot, or

future prospects, hung over them both when they started, which left them, as we saw, far from cheerful. We know not that they were now more certain in their plans; but there was that degree of elasticity and eagerness about them, which a state of great, though undefined expectation always creates; and which, though the future may be dark and shadowy, sheds over the present, an excitement not unexhilarating, though not, perhaps, amounting to absolute confidence.

Whatever were their feelings, the green valleys of the Pyrenees, with their shepherds and Toyas, their crags and torrents, and François, and the man of imagination; in short, primeval life seemed entirely forgotten. Wentworth drove instantly to his club, eager to know what was passing; and De Vere, eager also about politics, but more still about the fate of his family, drove to Grosvenor Square. Wentworth found all he wished from his associates; and De Vere learned all he feared from Dr. Wilmot, who had called at Lord Mowbray's, previous to setting out to visit him once more.

“I do not like to alarm you,” said Wilmot, after the greetings with De Vere were over,

“but I should be wanting in fairness if I told you I did not fear the worst.”

“And my mother and Constance?” said De Vere, in much emotion.

“They behave like angels,” returned Wilmot; “and if it is lamentable for human nature to see how it may be sported with for want of proper regulation, it is reviving and most edifying to see what it can do when raised and set off by real virtue.”

“My mother, then, is at Castle Mowbray?” said De Vere.

“She is, and of the greatest use to her charming niece, by her exemplary firmness; though, I fear, of very little to the poor lord, her brother; for, with submission, poor I may justly call him.”

“And Mr. Clayton?”

“He is not there, nor has been. In truth, what should he do there? He could not save Lord Mowbray, or of course he would. And if so, who can blame him if he remains where he is more wanted?”

“I am sure I do not,” replied De Vere, “and yet—but I prophesied it”—and he became much affected by the contending recollections.

At length, recovering some calmness, he asked

if he could do any good by accompanying Wilmot to the castle; for though his uncle had few demands upon his sympathy, he was indignant at Clayton, and full of tenderness towards his mother and cousin.

"To your uncle, I fear none," replied the doctor; "to your mother much—to Lady Constance, some."

De Vere felt eager at that little word *some*.

Not to lengthen this part of the narrative, the two gentlemen were quickly agreed; and De Vere, having made a slight preparation for the journey was soon on the road to Castle Mowbray, with the friendly Wilmot

During the journey he was informed of all that had passed in his absence; the tottering state of the ministry; their efforts to save themselves by new arrangements; and the consequent disgrace of Lord Mowbray.

"Forgive me, for calling it so," said the doctor: "for, considering how he has borne it, it is the appropriate term; nor among the many cases of disappointed ambition which I have observed, and endeavoured to cure, have I ever seen one so dangerous, or so obstinate as this. After the most bitter and poignant grief, which that angel, his daughter, could not assuage, he

is now sunk into lethargy, and almost insensibility. If this go on, he will either die, or, what is worse, fall into second childhood."

De Vere shuddered, and expressed his astonishment, that one who had taken such little part in the real direction of affairs, and was in himself so independent as to fortune, should feel the loss of place so acutely.

"I fear we must not examine it," observed Wilmot; "for it is any thing but one of those honourable cases of illness, and sometimes of death, which are occasioned by an excess of sensibility to reverses, wherein the country has been the sufferer as well as the individual."

"Have there ever been such cases?" asked De Vere.

"Why, yes; eaten up, as we are supposed to be, by universal selfishness, in our too advanced state of luxury, I have yet seen such spirits—rarely—but I have seen them; and the exclamation of 'Oh! save my country, heaven!' is not a mere supposition of poetry, to prove that patriotism may be the 'ruling passion, strong in death.'"

"Such cases," said De Vere, mournfully, and thinking much of the contrast which his uncle's bore to them, "must be really what you

have called them—honourable But how do you account for the same effect on Lord Mowbray, where the cause seems so inadequate, and when I fear I must allow, that his mind had not that reach of ability, any more than that elevation of ambition, which can alone, one would think, produce so much unhappiness?"

"To be disappointed," answered Wilmot, "in whatever we love, with all our heart and soul, corrodes both heart and soul, if unsheathed by philosophy, or, what is better, by religion. On the other hand, experience shews that the violence of a passion is by no means always in proportion either to the honourableness of its object, or to the apparent pleasure of its gratification. Let us not, therefore, blame Lord Mowbray too much, if his ambition was of that little sort, which is confined to little men. I mean mere court favour, or office consequence. The famous Lauzun of Lewis XIV., you know, having laid down his charge of captain of the king's guard, could not bear to go to a review for forty years afterwards."

"Ridiculous!" cried De Vere.

"Well, then, take a more splendid, but scarcely more rational example:—the great Duke of Epernon, on being dismissed from his

employments, used, in order to shew his superiority, to traverse Paris with a train of eight hundred gentlemen. ‘Nevertheless,’ says an historian, *‘au milieu de cet éclat extérieur, le chagrin de se voir éloigné des affaires le rongeoit cruellement au dedans.’* Neither of these grandees were much better than Lord Mowbray; and, however we may laugh at such little vanities, we know what they are in little minds. It is only for truly great, and self-supporting dignity, to feel alike superior to success or reverse. A character like this may really be said to be independent of the world.”

“This is true philosophy,” observed De Vere, “and worth all that all are struggling for.”

He then fell into silence, and was much lost in meditating his own situation, past, present, and to come. In this, the share of thought he gave to the interesting personages he was about to see, may be imagined, and it seemed even to *his* firm nerves, as if something mysterious was hanging over him, which had a dark and indeterminate reference to his cousin, such as he could not pursue with pleasure, but could not quit.

“It seems then,” said he, (at last breaking

silence,) "that she is the same unspoiled creature as ever; and though she has been assailed, she has not been hurt by the world!"

"And of whom may you be speaking?" asked Wilmot, with a good humoured but significant smile.

De Vere, rather embarrassed, answered with all simplicity,

"Why, of Lady Constance, of whom we were talking."

"We talked of her," said Wilmot, "above an hour ago, as we passed the towers of Kenilworth. The last person mentioned was, I think, the Duke of Epernon, and the last subject, the insufficiency of little minds to support themselves under the reverses of ambition."

So saying, the sagacious, though friendly Doctor again fixed his eye significantly on his fellow-traveller.

De Vere felt as a boy when caught in a fault. He coloured, stammered, and looked out at the window. Recovering, he observed, "it could not be surprising that he should feel the greatest interest for his cousin under such a trial as awaited her."

"It will be a great one," replied Wilmot, "for she loves her father; yet do I not fear

her; for never did I see such strong affections so tempered, or controuled by so much propriety and fortitude."

By this time they had arrived within sight of the towers of Castle Mowbray; and De Vere could not help recalling, with pensiveness, the last visit he paid to them, and his sudden flight from what he thought their ominous reception of him. The cold gleams of the figures in the armoury were still before him; nor was he relieved by a transition from these to the last and too formal reception given him by Constance herself. The thought of it made him uneasy, and he became agitated with unpleasant prognostications as to his present visit. All this could not escape the penetration of his observing companion, who, however, thought it serious enough to abstain from raillery. For this De Vere thanked him in his heart, and it increased his attachment to this excellent person, to a degree which never afterwards was forgotten. So powerful is often a very little circumstance; and so cogent a very small, but delicate kindness, shown at the proper moment, in fixing the opinion, and exciting regard for life.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A LESSON.

It is too late ; the life of all his blood
Is touch'd corruptibly ; and his pure brain,
Which some suppose the soul's fair dwelling house,
Doth, by the idle comments that it makes,
Foretell the ending of mortality.

SHAKESPEARE.

As De Vere's coming had not been announced, it was settled that he should ascend the hill of Castle Mowbray on foot, and leave it to Dr. Wilmot to prepare his mother and uncle for his arrival.

The carriage rolled on, but it was dark when De Vere approached the castle ; and the many lights moving to and fro, as well as a sort of bustle among the domestics, made him think that a crisis impended which gave a shock to his heart. For though he had not loved Lord Mowbray, because his nature permitted no one

to love him—though he had been even wronged and affronted by him—he felt that the approach of death was a great curer of wounded feelings; and the fear that this cure might be impending, banished everything but sympathy. But when he thought of his mother, and the certain shock this misfortune would give to his cousin, he surrendered his heart to that impression alone; and, unable to proceed, he sat down upon a bench in the court-yard, waiting farther intelligence.

A thousand visions of the future were then conjured up to his raised imagination. He saw his cousin pressed down with grief for her loss; he saw that loss enhanced by the reflection (bitter to her mind) that it was occasioned by a sensibility to misfortune little ennobled by its character; he saw her afterwards sole mistress of the ample domain around him: and in so far, elevated to a greater distance than ever from the secret, yet still preserved wish of his heart.

While in this reverie, the great gate opened, and a servant went forth with a torch, as he thought in quest of him, for he held it up as if to search all parts of the court-yard. De Vere therefore presented himself, and advancing to the guard-room, was soon in his mother's

arms, who withdrew him instantly to one of the side chambers.

She received him with all her usual affection, but was evidently under exertion to curb some strong emotion. At length, summoning all her self-possession, she said to him—

“ You are come but in time to see your uncle die. The hand of death is upon him, and in one little hour the last Lord Mowbray will perhaps be no more.”

“ My poor Constance !” cried De Vere, surprised into an exclamation, which, before his mother, he had never yet indulged.

“ Hope the best for her,” said Lady Eleanor, “ for her mind is prepared, and her resignation perfect. But my unfortunate brother ! Had he her fortitude, he might possibly yet survive.”

Lady Eleanor was here almost overcome by contending emotions ; for though, as affecting her happiness, the personal loss of Lord Mowbray could not be great ; yet, as a sister, a Mowbray herself, and a high-minded woman, the reflection of the weakness of this last of her line, who had succumbed to so trifling a reverse, was almost as cruel a wound as the loss itself.

“ Is the event then nearly over ?” said De Vere, much moved.

“ I know not,” answered Lady Eleanor, “ but Dr. Wilmot has dismissed us, to watch in expectation of it, and says that a lethargy of four days can have but one termination. God’s will be done !”

She then proceeded to inform her son of as many things as she could, in the short interval during which she permitted herself to be absent from Constance, who, she said, took his visit most kindly, and would see him when she could. She then folded him in her arms, and, what with the sight of him, unexpectedly restored to her, and the trial which still awaited her in the sick chamber above, it was happy for her heart that it was made so firm.

On her quitting him, De Vere resolved to remain where he was, only sending word to Dr. Wilmot, that he waited his summons.

But the hand of death was now upon its victim, and that so heavily that nothing could extricate him from its grasp. Wilmot saw this, nor pretended to that skill which could minister to a mind diseased, “ wherein the patient must minister to himself.” Lord Mowbray’s malady was in the heart ; and all his bodily complaints,

consuming as they were, were only symptomatic. The symptoms might be removed for awhile, but (the disorder uncured) they would infallibly return. This Wilnot had expected; for, from the few conversations which the earl had been previously able to hold with him, he found that his memory was still among the scenes and persons where it always had been, though his tone about them was altered. Soon, however, this sank, if not into lethargy, into a brooding silence, which was worse. He sat whole days, seemingly lost to his daughter, his sister, and himself, with a fixed look, from which nothing could, for a long time, rouse him.

Constance, though wrung with grief, never succumbed; and her active attentions, and the medicines of Wilnot, so far succeeded, that he revived from this first attack, and for some days became comparatively active. He even said he would read, and tried to divert his thoughts with history. But history brought him back to politics and courts, and he threw it from him with disgust. He then called for works of imagination; but having no imagination of his own, he could little enter into that of others, and peevishly pronounced them to be fit only for children. Constance then proposed some of the

lighter, and afterwards the graver moralists. But these he said were mere theorists who had never known the world they taught us to dislike. Lady Eleanor at last, with some distrust, but also with some hope, placed the Bible before him, and to the delight of Constance, and herself, he seemed disposed, for some days, to embrace it as a study.

“ This will do,” said Wilmot, to whom it was communicated, “ if it last. Cultivate it by all means.”

They did so ; but what was their grief to find that he soon became cold and lost to the subject. He turned over the leaves with a glazed and lack-lustre eye, and it was evident that he was not able to comprehend, still less to remember, any of the comforting truths which he had read. The only result was a feeling that he was stupified.

In fact, the whole Bible was so new, and so totally the reverse of all that had ever been his study, that the most sublime images were lost, the most consolatory passages thrown away upon him. His thoughts wandered back to the world, like Plato's grosser spirits to the charnel-houses, where the bodies they had inhabited, were still lingering. Like them, he was not

even fit to be improved, and though separated from his old habits, he could not live without them.

“The Scriptures,” said he, “are not a fit guide to men who have known the world.”

In a little time, all notion of a diversion to his thoughts from reading, was given up, and he relapsed into fits of longer and deeper melancholy, of which the worst apprehensions began now to be entertained. These were confirmed by Wilmot, who endeavoured to rouse the attention of his patient, in vain. Once, and once only, he almost succeeded; but it was only for a moment, though that moment was important, and shewed what the ruling thought had been. Wilmot having tried to rouse him, by all the exciting topics he could think of, at last mentioned De Vere, as desirous to pay his duty to him.

“I cannot see him,” murmured the startled earl; “but tell him to put no trust in a minister, because he may have betrayed another for his sake. Tell him that Clayton is a rogue, and that *I* myself am——”

The unhappy nobleman could get no further, and, turning on his side, the little fire which this exertion had kindled in his eye, was spent, and

he relapsed into a silence which soon became eternal.

Luckily for their own peace, neither Constance nor Lady Eleanor heard these last words. They would have been a knell never to be forgotten. To Wilmot alone were they uttered, who only revealed them to De Vere, and then buried them in his own heart. They proved, indeed, that conscience, as well as disappointment, had had a share in hurrying on his fate.

Upon the news being communicated, Constance uttered no cry, and shed no tear. She had been so prepared, and resignation had been so habitual to her, that she at least experienced no paroxysm, though she felt much mental grief. On her knees, in her closet, her soul poured itself forth, and she felt supported, nay, even raised. On the second day, she had the relief of tears, that bath and balm to pent-up minds; and Wilmot, who had staid on purpose to watch over her, thought he might quit her, after advising her instant removal to Talbois with Lady Eleanor. To this not merely change of scene was an inducement, but the many irksome but necessary acts of business which she was forced to witness. Her situation itself, of sole representative of her father, made these more

personal ; and she gladly availed herself of the offered assistance of Mortimer, whose proximity of blood seemed to authorise it, and whose undeviating and delicate attentions in the most minute particulars, saved her many a bitter moment.

Little do those know, who have never felt the misery of losing those they love, of what value these attentions are, or how much anguish is spared by them to the sufferer. Never can we be too grateful for them ; for, of all kindnesses, all generous, all friendly acts, the soothing hand stretched to our assistance, under mental woe, is fullest of healing, and most eagerly caught at.

Just so was it with Constance, in her feeling towards her cousin. She did not see him till the day after the event had taken place ; when, softened to a tenderness she had never before shewn, she gave and received an embrace from him which thrilled his heart.

“ How good of you to come ! but you were always so ! ” was all she could say. Enough, and more than enough, to fill him with extacy ; for had the empire of the world been offered him to forego the delight of those honied words, we may safely say he would have spurned at the

offer. Their effect upon him impressed her still more with his sympathy; for, what with his real feeling for her situation, what with the joy of seeing her again, and the still greater joy which this indication of her resumed kindness occasioned, he could not restrain a burst of emotion, which shewed itself in manly tears. It was a sympathy which Constance felt home, and never afterwards forgot

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME

